

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN RE: RULES AND REGULATIONS)
GOVERNING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS) **DOCKET NO. 3545**
EDUCATION ACCESS FUND REQUIRED)
UNDER R.I.G.L. §39-1-61)

NOTICE OF RULEMAKING AND PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of R.I.Gen.Laws §§39-1-1 et seq. and 42-35-3, the Public Utilities Commission (hereinafter "Commission") will conduct a public hearing on **Wednesday, September 17, 2003, at 9:30 a.m.**, in the first-floor hearing room of the Commission's office located at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island, for the purpose of adopting rules and regulations to establish a Telecommunications Education Access Fund in compliance with the requirements of the Rhode Island General Laws, Section 39-1-61.

Rhode Island General Laws, Section 39-1-61, provides that commencing on January 1, 2004 a program and funding mechanism be in place and available to qualified libraries and schools (Kindergarten through Grade 12) to assist in paying the costs of acquiring, installing and using telecommunications technologies to access the internet. The assessment of a monthly surcharge by the each telecommunications service provider and to be payable by each residence and business telephone user in the state of Rhode Island, with the exception of state, local or quasi-municipal agencies, is required by Rhode Island General Law Sec. 39-1-61. The level of the surcharge will be determined by the General Assembly on annual basis.

The proposed rules and regulations provide details for the eligibility requirements for libraries and schools, and for the collection, administration and disbursement of funds.

For calendar year 2004, the Rhode Island General Assembly has set the surcharge at 26 cents per access line per month.

The proposed rules and regulations are on file at Commission Clerk's Office at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island. Copies of the proposed rules and regulations may be obtained in person, by mail by calling 941-4500, ext. 107 or may be accessed at www.ripuc.org/docket/3545page.html.

Interested persons wishing to offer data, views, or arguments on the proposed rules and regulations may do so either orally, on the day of the hearing, or in writing, by submitting an original and nine (9) copies of their comments to the following address on or before 4:00 p.m., September 30, 2003.

Luly E. Massaro, Commission Clerk
Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888

Reference is also made to R.I.General.Laws Chapters 42-35 and 39-1, specifically, §§42-35-1, 42-35-2, 42-25-3, 42-35-4, 42-35-5, 39-1-15 and 39-1-38.

THE COMMISSION IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE HANDICAPPED. INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED MUST NOTIFY THE DIVISION BY CALLING 941-4500, EXT. 107, SEVENTY-TWO (72) HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE HEARING DATE.

Luly Massaro
Commission Clerk
August 27, 2003