

BEFORE THE
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

In the Matter of TIME WARNER)
ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY, L.P. dba)
Hawaiian Cablevision of Hilo)
(Hilo System))
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)
Updating of Basic Service Rate)
(FCC Form 1240))
)

DECISION AND ORDER NO. 230
(Rate Order)

WHEREAS, the Cable Television Division, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs of the State of Hawaii (the "State") became certified to regulate basic cable service rates and associated charges as of May 12, 1994, and has followed regulations prescribed by the Federal Communications Commission (the "FCC"), 47 C.F.R. Part 76, Subpart N ("FCC Rules"), and by the State's Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, sections 16-133-40 to 53 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules (the "Department Rules"), for the regulation of the basic service tier and associated equipment, installations, services and charges; and

WHEREAS, by letter dated May 12, 1994, the State notified Jones Spacelink of Hawaii, Inc. (the "Company")¹ that the Company's rates for the basic service tier and associated charges for equipment and installation for its cable system were subject to regulation by the State; and

WHEREAS, by Decision and Order No. 193 the State established \$7.81 as the Company's maximum permitted rate for the basic service tier (FCC Form 1210) effective as of June 1, 1995; and

¹By Decision and Order No. 185 issued on April 8, 1996, the State approved the transfer of the cable communications franchise held by the Jones Spacelink of Hawaii, Inc. to Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P.

WHEREAS, in connection with justifying the Company's rate adjustment for the basic service tier, the Company submitted its FCC Form 1240 to the State on October 7, 1996 (hereinafter referred to as "Rate Filing"), for the period January 1, 1997 through December 31, 1997;² and

WHEREAS, the State retained a financial consultant to assist it in the streamlined rate review process; and

WHEREAS, the State reviewed the Rate Filing, and prepared a proposed rate order, a copy of which was provided to the Company prior to the issuance of this Rate Order; and

WHEREAS, the Company submitted its written comments on the proposed rate order by letter dated September 23, 1997; and

WHEREAS, the Company has the burden of proving that its proposed adjustment is in conformance with the FCC Rules;³ and

WHEREAS, under the FCC Rules an operator who chooses to use FCC Form 1240 may update its permitted programming rates on an annual basis, and may adjust its rates to reflect reasonably certain and quantifiable changes in external costs, inflation and the number of regulated channels that are projected for the 12 months following the rate change;⁴ and

WHEREAS, in general, the annual rate adjustment has two components - the first component is based on the operator's projected costs, and the second component is based on the costs which an operator has actually incurred; and

WHEREAS, under the Thirteenth Order on Reconsideration, an operator that elects to use the annual adjustment methodology may adjust its programming rates once per year on a maximum permitted rate that accounts for reasonably certain and reasonably quantifiable changes in external costs, inflation, and the number of regulated channels that are projected for the 12 months following the rate change; and

²The Rate Filing submitted for the Company's Hilo system covers Community Unit Identification numbers CUID HI0022 (Hilo), HI0040 (Pahoa), and HI0096 (Volcano).

³See 47 C.F.R. Section 76.937(a), and Section 16-133-46 of the Department's Rules.

⁴See Thirteenth Order on Reconsideration, paragraph 7 at p. 4, FCC 95-397 (rel. September 22, 1995); 47 C.F.R. section 76.922(e).

WHEREAS, the annual adjustment methodology also provides a "true-up" mechanism to correct differences between the operator's projected costs and the actual costs that occurred during the 12 month period; and

WHEREAS, the "true-up" mechanism provides that if the operator has not recovered actual costs it incurred, the operator may add such costs to its rates at a later date, with interest, and it requires that the operator return to subscribers any overcharges that occurred, with interest; and

WHEREAS, the Company submitted its Rate Filing in connection with that certain Social Contract adopted by the FCC in Matter of Social Contract for Time Warner Cable, Order, DA 95-2491 (rel. December 15, 1995) ("Social Contract Order"), which permitted the Company to restructure its basic service programming rate by reducing that rate by 10 %, and to adjust it upwards for external costs, channel additions, and inflation, and allowed the Company to implement its restructured basic service rate on January 1, 1997;⁵ and

WHEREAS, in its Rate Filing the Company seeks to justify \$7.74 as the Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period, and the Company selected \$7.55 as the Operator Selected Rate for Projected Period;⁶ and

WHEREAS, the Company listed \$7.98 as the Current Maximum Permitted Rate on Line A1 of its Rate Filing; and

⁵ By Order released December 27, 1996 (DA 96-2192), the Cable Services Bureau approved the inclusion of the Company's Hilo system into the Time Warner Social Contract. The form used by the Company for this Rate Filing is a "one-time only form", which the Company may use for establishing the restructured rate that resulted from implementing the Social Contract. Thereafter, the Company must establish its rates in accordance with FCC Rules and in conformance with the provisions of the Social Contract. Social Contract Order at paragraph 8.

For purposes of this Rate Order, it is presumed that the Company by signing the certification statement on its FCC Form 1240, has properly completed said form, the instructions and worksheets in accordance with the terms of the Social Contract, and that any line item which was modified by the Company was so modified in accordance with the Social Contract as adopted by the FCC.

⁶According to tariffs filed by the Company, \$7.55 (exclusive of franchise fees and taxes) is the actual monthly charge to subscribers for the basic service tier for the Projected Period effective as of January 1, 1997.

WHEREAS, FCC instructions provide that the Current Maximum Permitted Rate is the permitted rate for regulated programming services according to FCC regulations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Decision and Order No. 193 the State established the Company's maximum permitted rate of \$7.81 for its basic service tier as of June 1, 1995; and

WHEREAS, adjusting Line A1 to reflect the established maximum permitted rate of \$7.81, decreases the Company's proposed Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period by \$.29 or from \$7.74 to \$7.45; and

WHEREAS, with respect to Lines E2 (Number of Months in True-Up Period 1) and E3 (Number of Months between the end of True-Up Period 1 and the end of the most recent Projected Period) of the Company's FCC Form 1240, the Company included an amount of 8.5 and 0, respectively; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to FCC instructions Lines E2 and E3 should include the amount of 5 and 3, respectively; and

WHEREAS, adjusting Lines E2 and E3 accordingly decreases the Company's proposed Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period by \$.02 or from \$7.45 to \$7.43; and

WHEREAS, with respect to Line C1 (Unclaimed Inflation) of the Company's FCC Form 1240, the Company included an amount of 1.79%; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to FCC instructions Line C1 should include the amount 1.00%; and

WHEREAS, adjusting Line C1 accordingly decreases the Company's proposed Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period by \$.09 or from \$7.43 to \$7.34;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The Company's proposed Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period of \$7.74 is disapproved.
2. The Company's Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period, exclusive of franchise fees and taxes, for the basic service tier (assuming a 10-channel basic service

tier) as of January 1, 1997 and continuing up to the effective date of the Company's subsequent adjustment implemented in accordance the FCC Rules, shall be \$7.34.

3. Subject to offsets permitted by FCC Rules, the Company shall refund that portion of actual rates paid by subscribers plus interest for the basic service tier to the extent such actual rates exceeded the maximum permitted rate approved herein in accordance with applicable FCC regulations. The Company shall not offset refunds by the amount of any discounts or promotions provided to subscribers. The refund for the basic service tier shall be the difference between the actual rate of \$7.55 and the approved Maximum Permitted Rate for Projected Period of \$7.34. The refund period shall run from January 1, 1997 up to the date the Company implements a subsequent adjustment in accordance with FCC Rules. With respect to each affected subscriber entitled to a refund, the Company shall implement the rate refunds ordered herein as soon as possible, but in any case within 60 days after the effective date of this Rate Order.

4. The Company may not make adjustments for overestimated or underestimated costs in the Rate Filing, nor may the Company increase its basic service tier rate, institute charges for any other types of service, equipment or installation associated with the basic service tier, without first complying with all applicable laws or regulations, including the Amended Rules, FCC Orders, and the Social Contract. The Company shall reduce its current rate for the basic service tier so that such rate does not exceed the maximum permitted rate approved in paragraph 2 hereof, as adjusted for subsequent rate filings that have taken effect pursuant to FCC regulations.

5. Within 30 days after the effective date of this Rate Order, the Company shall submit a written plan to the State which, at a minimum, sets forth the Company's method of providing refunds to subscribers (plus interest, franchise fees and applicable taxes) ordered in paragraph 3 hereof; identifies the basis for the calculation of the amount of refunds; identifies the amount of the refund; identifies the applicable interest rate and explains how it was calculated; identifies the items and the rates therefor with respect to calculating any offsets of undercharges with overcharges in accordance with the FCC's rules and guidelines; and explains how the rate refunds ordered herein shall be implemented. Such plan is subject to the State's review and approval. The Company's obligation to submit such a plan shall not affect the Company's obligation to implement rate refunds as described in paragraph 3 hereof.

6. The Company shall file with the State within 90 days from the date of this Rate Order a certification, signed by an authorized representative of the Company, stating whether the Company has complied fully with all provisions of this Rate Order, describing in detail the precise measures taken to implement this Rate Order, and

describing in detail the precise measures taken to implement this Rate Order, and showing how any refunds (including interest, franchise fees, and taxes) were calculated and distributed.

7. The Company may charge rates less than the maximum permitted rate indicated herein, as long as such rates are applied in a uniform and nondiscriminatory way, pursuant to applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

8. This Rate Order is not be construed as a finding that the State has accepted as correct any specific entry, explanation or argument made by the Company not specifically addressed herein.


9. The State reserves all rights it has under FCC Rules including the right to review any pending rate filing submitted by the Company, and to establish reasonable rates for the basic service tier and associated equipment and installation charges, in the event the State determines that the proposed rates or charges are unreasonable under FCC Rules, including any modifications or amendments to such rules.

10. The State reserves the right to modify this Rate Order if, at any time, it determines that information the Company provided to the State is incorrect or misleading in any material manner, or that the Company is not in compliance with this Rate Order.

11. Public notice of this Rate Order shall be provided in accordance with section 16-133-45(b) of the Department's Rules. A copy of this Rate Order shall be mailed to the Company.

12. This Rate Order is issued as of the date hereof, and in accordance with the Department's Rules becomes effective on the 15th day of December, 1997.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawaii December 1, 1997.


Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Director
Commerce and Consumer Affairs
State of Hawaii

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing DECISION AND ORDER NO. 230 was served upon the following parties at the address shown below by mailing the same, postage prepaid, on this 1st day of December, 1997.

MR. RUSSELL SAIKI
Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P. dba
Hawaiian Cablevision of Hilo
200 Akamainui Street
Mililani, HI 96789-3999

Patti K. Kodama

Patti K. Kodama
Secretary