

NEWS RELEASE

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers®
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FCC Decision Should Bolster Telecom Industry

(Washington, D.C.) -- "The Federal Communications Commission made the correct call today in allowing states to decide the wholesale line rates that regional Bell companies can charge potential competitors," said IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill.

The IBEW sent a letter to the members of the FCC in December and issued a public statement in January urging the commission to leave the issue up to the state regulatory bodies who the union believes have the best grasp of local conditions that affect workers, consumers and communities.

"The central issue is to stimulate growth and job creation in an industry that is vital to the economic well-being of our nation," Hill continued. "The FCC's decision will enable more companies to enter local telecommunications markets, providing choice to consumers, better service and more job opportunities for displaced workers, and ultimately new employees. At a time when technological know-how continues to be vital to our economic growth and even our national security, fostering the growth of a highly skilled, mobile work force in the telecommunications industry should be a priority."

Hill noted that since passage of the Telecom Act of 1996, there has been some \$150 billion in infrastructure investment, most of it by companies other than the regional Bells.

“We believe the FCC has made the right decision, and we expect that the promise of growth and opportunity in the telecommunications industry will be fulfilled,” Hill concluded.

Founded in 1891, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is a 775,000-member union representing workers in construction, utilities, telecommunications, manufacturing, broadcasting, railroads and government.

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