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PROJECT NO. 32182

PUC INVESTIGATION OF METHODS §
TO IMPROVE ELECTRIC AND §
TELECOMMUNICATIONS §
INFRASTRUCTURE TO MINIMIZE §
LONG TERM OUTAGES AND §
RESTORATION COSTS ASSOCIATED §
WITH GULF COAST HURRICANES §

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**VERIZON SOUTHWEST'S UPDATE ON ITS VEGETATION
MANAGEMENT AND GROUND BASED INSPECTIONS
OF OVERHEAD FACILITIES**

In compliance with the Commission's directive at the October 8, 2008 Open Meeting, Staff has requested an update from the electric and telecommunications companies of their vegetation management and ground based inspections of overhead facilities programs. Verizon Southwest respectfully responds to that request.

Vegetation Management

The current practice, as noted in Verizon Southwest's filing of September 29, 2006 in this project, has not changed. Briefly stated, whenever work is performed on outside plant, a visual inspection of the surrounding vegetation is performed. If a dangerous or threatening condition is found to exist, it is promptly addressed and rectified. Verizon Southwest does not keep a detailed summary of its activities in this area; however, this practice, which is industry-standard, has worked well and continues to do so. Fundamentally, it has proven successful while striking a balance between cost and facility integrity.

Ground Based Inspections for Overhead Facilities

Like the vegetation management program, Verizon Southwest's ground based inspection of overhead facilities also takes place at the time work is performed on outside plant facilities. Verizon Southwest conducts a visual inspection of the poles and cable at the time of new service installation activities and prior to the start of any repair activities, to ensure the structural integrity of the poles and the sound appearance of the aerial cable. Further tests are performed for pole integrity and possible rotting conditions. If an unsafe situation is observed and/or aerial cable is observed to be damaged or it appears that damage may occur as a result of the cable's surroundings, corrective action is promptly taken. This procedure has worked well for Verizon Southwest in the past and there has been no indication that a change is warranted.

Respectfully submitted,

VERIZON SOUTHWEST

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