



**For Immediate Release:** 05/13/21

John B. Howard, Interim Chair

**Contact:**

James Denn | [James.Denn@dps.ny.gov](mailto:James.Denn@dps.ny.gov) | (518) 474-7080

<http://www.dps.ny.gov>

<http://twitter.com/NYSDPS>

**21051/20-C-0267**

## **PSC Approves Plan to Improve Frontier's Customer Service**

***Frontier Will Spend \$83 Million in Capital Investments in New York Over Next 3 Years***

***Expanding High-Speed Internet Service to 50,000 Households and Businesses Underway***

**ALBANY** — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved a \$12.5 million plan for Frontier Communications Corporation (Frontier) and its New York operating subsidiaries that will help improve customer service. The plan includes spending on capital expenditures on such things as central office battery replacements, new fiber-to-the-premises construction, remote terminal battery replacements, and other outside plant improvements. With expected action plan investments included, Frontier plans to spend a minimum of \$83 million in capital investments in New York State through 2023.

“The Commission has determined that because of the need for significant improvement to Frontier’s service quality performance, the implementation of this action plan must be monitored closely,” **said Commission Chair John B. Howard.** “The plan commits Frontier to regularly report on its progress regarding capital projects and service quality metric performance. The Commission finds the action plan is in the public interest.”

Frontier and its subsidiaries serve approximately 196,000 access lines throughout New York State, providing telephone, cable television and internet services. In October 2020, Frontier’s bankruptcy restructuring was approved by the Commission with conditions that committed Frontier to spend \$9 million in incremental capital expenditures on a service quality improvement program with defined targets and incentives, and required that an action plan be submitted for approval by the Commission.

The approved action plan includes \$12.5 million in expected capital expenditures that will address specific measures and projects to be completed by Frontier in 24 central offices identified as needing improvement, and how these projects will enhance service quality and network reliability. The central offices are located in Ausable Forks, Blue Mountain Lake, Canandaigua, Chester, East Rochester/Pittsford, Fort Plain, Georgetown, Gloversville, Goshen, Highland Mills, Keeseville, Lake Luzerne, Maybrook, Middletown, Monroe, Montgomery, Naples, Norwich, Paul Smiths, Port Jervis, Saint Johnsville, Unadilla, Walton, and Wells. The objectives of the plan are to implement a focused program of capital investment and proactive maintenance aimed at reducing the number of troubles experienced by customers and improve service quality performance in the 24 central offices.

Frontier believes that the commitments are expected to provide much needed improvement in the quality of service delivered to customers in these areas, but are not expected to negatively impact the remaining areas in the company’s service territory. Frontier will use various methods, including

operations personnel input and feedback, leveraging of enhanced preventative maintenance tracking programs, and analysis of trouble ticket data to prioritize projects included in the action plan.

Frontier's action plan includes the following four project category descriptions and intended capital expenditures:

- **Fiber Investment:** Frontier plans to provide fiber-to-the-premise network to approximately 8,000 locations as part of this improvement plan at a cost of approximately \$6.4 million by 2023. This expansion is in addition to approximately 30,000 locations being funded by the State's New NY Broadband Program through mid-2021 and funding for 12,000 New York locations recently awarded to Frontier in the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction. The company says the fiber deployment will allow it to offer broadband services capable of download speeds as fast as 1 Gbps and move current services off its legacy copper network to improve telephone service quality.
- **Central Office Backup Power:** As recent events like Tropical Storm Isaias have shown, preparedness is central to maintaining communication and access to emergency services during and after storm events and resulting commercial power outages. As part of the action plan, Frontier will replace batteries at various central offices to provide improved network resiliency and reliability during periods of commercial power loss. Frontier states it plans to spend approximately \$1.36 million during 2021-2023 in these central offices to replace backup batteries. The planned breakdown by year is \$885,000 in 2021, \$315,000 in 2022 and \$165,000 in 2023.
- **Remote Terminals:** Frontier has identified over 190 projects to be completed at remote terminals within the areas served by the 24 central offices. These projects encompass upgrading remote switching equipment, installing backup power (new batteries and/or generators), copper to fiber migrations, and other fiber span projects. The company notes that this is all intended to reduce trouble tickets in these central offices and improve service quality. The company claims these projects have an approximate cost of \$3.3 million over the three-year period.
- **Outside Plant:** Frontier plans to use the history of troubles and the newly implemented ability to track troubles by lead cable in each of the central offices to look at the most vulnerable sections of outside plant and take steps to rectify these proactively. In addition, Frontier plans to provide additional training to field technicians, construction employees, and contractors to look for and report outside plant in need of repair or replacement. Currently, Frontier has identified approximately \$1.37 million in cable repair projects.

In approving the action plan, the Commission also specified the content to be included in required quarterly reporting on the status and completion of all projects.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 20-C-0267 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.