

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

I. FOREWORD

On the eve of the 21st century, the telecommunications industry, like many others, faces a myriad of challenges and opportunities. Growing global population and the spread of market economies holds the promise of new customers and new business opportunities. Our industry has been, and will continue to be, a driving force in this growing global marketplace. Advancements in telecommunications have sparked nothing less than a revolution in the speed and manner in which business is conducted. Telecommunications makes it possible for us to immediately connect to one another - by phone, email, video-conference, and new technologies yet to be imagined. Being connected is the basis of domestic and international politics, trade, culture and understanding.

The corollary to this picture of expanding opportunity is the growing demand that industrialized society places on the planet's natural systems and resources. It is now widely acknowledged that if we wish to leave our children and grandchildren a healthy and resource-rich environment, as well as a healthy and sustainable global economy, we (society) must take steps today to curtail negative impacts to important ecosystems and depletion of non-renewable resources. In other words, we must accept the responsibility that goes with global opportunity. We must participate in the ecological stewardship of the planet.

The telecommunications industry prides itself on being a group of leaders and innovators. We hope to play the same role in the effort to sustain and restore the global environment. We know that our responsibility begins at home. We must continue to examine whether our existing businesses are being operated in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. We must also aspire to contribute new ideas, energy, services and technology to the global search for answers. It is our hope that telecommunications may provide a model for how to increasingly substitute the movement of information and ideas for the movement of goods and people, a far less resource intensive transaction. This shift could significantly lessen the environmental burdens of the planet.

The following principles identify our areas of environmental responsibility. Our intent is to move beyond efforts aimed only at complying with existing health, safety and environmental regulations. We hope these principles will help guide us in our search for new and better solutions to management and operational problems, as well as new technologies, products and services that enable us to conduct our business and our lives in a more ecologically supportive manner.

It's important to acknowledge that our industry represents a diverse group of companies, varying widely in size and complexity - number of employees, customers, access lines, subsidiary businesses, etc. We expect that each company will evolve at its own pace and

based upon its unique situation, moving toward excellence as resources and business direction allow.

Finally, there is no more competitive and dynamic industry than telecommunications. Fierce battles continue to be fought over how our business will be conducted in the future and who the players will be. However, despite a context of avid competition, the creators of and signatories to this document agree that the industry should be alert for instances where it is appropriate for industry members to work cooperatively in seeking solutions to environmental concerns. Ultimately, no industry will thrive if we fail to protect the natural environment and steward the resources we must pass on to future generations. And we are unlikely to solve many of the complex environmental problems we face today unless we all work toward this common goal.. This is the commitment we make in the document that follows.

II. VISION STATEMENT

The telecommunications industry seeks to be a leader in the area of environmental responsibility as well as an innovator of communications technologies and services, bringing creative solutions to bear on society's natural resource issues and ecological concerns.

III. MISSION STATEMENT

We will work on a continuing basis to identify our environmental challenges and to develop solutions to them. We will also seek opportunities to provide environmental leadership and innovation, especially where such opportunities work to the advantage of our customers and shareholders. We will promote the use of telecommunications technology where its use could make a positive difference to the environment.

IV. PRINCIPLES

A. MANAGEMENT

1. Management Commitment

As a demonstration of our management commitment to environmental responsibility, we will:

- a) Designate a senior manager to be responsible for environmental issues
- b) Allocate appropriate financial and human resources to environmental management
- c) Take a leadership role in developing policies, programs, and practices that are designed to improve environmental performance
- d) Integrate these policies, programs and practices into the management of our

business

- e) Look for opportunities to include environmental protection goals in our business plans
- f) Actively promote the use of telecommunications technology within the industry itself, including the use of telecommuting, e-commerce, and videoconferencing as viable work alternatives

2. Continuous Process Improvement

To improve our environmental performance, we will:

- a) Review our environmental impacts
- b) Review our environmental management efforts
- c) Implement enhancements to both operational and management systems
- d) Increase our awareness of telecommunications impacts on ecological systems, biodiversity, human health and the communities in which we operate

3. Employee Education and Training

To enable our employees to make sound environmental decisions in their day to day activities, we will, where appropriate:

- a) Provide employee training on environmental systems, values, and ethics
- b) Provide employee training with regard to environmental issues and procedures, and the environmental regulatory context in which the telecommunications industry operates

B. TECHNOLOGY, SERVICE AND PRODUCT INNOVATION

1. Development of New Technologies and Services

To enhance the telecommunications industry's ability to provide safe and innovative technologies and services that may benefit the environment, we will:

- a) Look for new technologies or refinements to existing technologies that enable customers to more easily substitute the movement of information and ideas for the movement of goods and people
- b) Provide our customers with a greater range of technology and service choices that can help them minimize their own impacts on the environment
- c) Support scientific research of the potential health, safety, and ecological implications of our technologies and services, as appropriate

2. Supplier Relationships

To encourage those who supply the telecommunications industry with products and services to apply the same high environmental standards to themselves, we will:

- a) Include environmental considerations in our procurement decisions
- b) Work with suppliers to develop telecommunications products that are safe in their intended use and efficient in their consumption of energy and natural resources
- c) Encourage suppliers to incorporate "design for the environment" (DfE) factors in the conception, design, production, packaging, distribution and disposition of their products

3. Consumer Product Management

Recognizing that telecommunications-related products are used by millions of individual consumers, we will:

- a) Support programs to recycle telephone directories
- b) Educate consumers regarding the proper reuse, recycling or disposal of other products and product components (i.e. phones, batteries, etc.)

C. FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

1. Facility Siting

When planning the placement of our facilities - buildings, poles, underground structures, network lines, and towers in addition to seeking locations that are optimal for service provision, we will consider the impact that these facilities may have upon local communities. To accomplish this goal we will consider:

- a) The potential visual impacts of telecommunications facilities and attempt to design for integration into the environment
- b) Possible impacts of our facilities and the construction of our facilities upon wetlands, sensitive wildlife corridors, and other ecologically sensitive areas
- c) Adjacent land use when planning, constructing, maintaining and operating telecommunications facilities

2. Resource Conservation and Pollution Prevention

In order to encourage efficient resource use and stewardship of scarce or finite non-renewable resources as well as pollution prevention, we will:

- a) Use telecommunications technologies to enhance operational system efficiencies such as routing system management, remote system monitoring and inventory control/reduction
- b) Use telecommunications technologies such as video conferencing, teleconferencing, telecommuting and electronic mail to reduce employee vehicle miles and emissions, reduce office space requirements and reduce energy and paper consumption
- c) Support pollution prevention, energy management, and water conservation

programs

- d) Encourage source reduction, reuse, and recycling programs
- e) Investigate the use of cleaner alternatives to highly polluting and/or non-renewable resources, as well as hazardous materials

3. Environmental Restoration

We will minimize the impact of our operations on the environment and:

- a) Address conditions that we have caused that may endanger health, safety or the environment
- b) Consider efforts to restore natural areas where appropriate

D. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Public Dialogue and Education

To demonstrate our commitment to the environmental health and well-being of the communities in which we conduct business, we will:

- a) Foster openness and dialogue with local communities and the public on shared environmental issues
- b) Be sensitive and responsive to community concerns about telecommunications and the environment
- c) Pursue public education opportunities with regard to the issues the telecommunications industry faces and the problems our industry can help solve

2. Reporting

To communicate the progress of this industry on environmental issues, we will:

- a) Report key elements of our environmental performance to stakeholders on a periodic basis
- b) Encourage stakeholder feedback and assistance in improving our environmental performance

3. Telecommunications Technology Awareness

To realize the tremendous environmental benefit that telecommunications technology can offer society, we will:

- a) Educate others about applications of telecommunications technology that can benefit the environment
- b) Promote the broader use of existing telecommunications technology in other sectors

- c) Promote the cultural acceptance of new work alternatives enabled by telecommunications technology
- d) Look for targeted opportunities to use telecommunications technology where the environmental benefit would be significant
- e) Promote the development of new and innovative telecommunication technology in the marketplace

4. Cooperation Within and Beyond the Industry

To encourage cooperation on environmental issues, we will:

- a) Work with others in the industry, where appropriate, to address complex environmental issues
- b) Work together on a Communications Environmental Excellence Initiative (CEEI) that will identify projects of mutual commitment and concern within the telecommunications industry
- c) Develop a CEEI web-site that will serve as a vehicle for disseminating information and conducting dialogue within and beyond the industry
- d) Contribute to the development of business, governmental and intergovernmental programs and educational initiatives that will enhance environmental awareness and protection
- e) Promote these principles by sharing experiences and, where appropriate, offering assistance to other organizations, industries and governments

V. CHARTER ENDORSERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Endorsers This charter has been officially endorsed by the following North American telecommunications companies:

Ameritech
 AT&T
 Bell Atlantic
 Bell Canada
 BellSouth
 BCT.TELUS
 U S WEST

An official signing ceremony took place at United Nations headquarters in New York City on February 22, 1999. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Center for Resource Management (CRM) attested to the commitment of the endorsing companies

Additional North American industry endorsers will be sought in the coming months.

Participants In addition to endorsing North American telecommunications companies, this charter was developed with input and feedback from the following organizations and individuals*:

Center for Resource Management

Dr. Bruce Hutton (University of Denver Environment Institute)

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (Jay Feldman)

Physicians for Social Responsibility (Sharon Newsome)

Resources for the Future (Paul Portney)

Rock Hill Telephone Company (Phillip Deal)

Tony Ruckel (Past President, Sierra Club)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United States Telephone Association (USTA) Environmental Subcommittee

*The participation of these organizations and individuals should not be construed as formal endorsement of the charter.

Project Management & Coordination The charter development process was directed by the non-profit Center for Resource Management, located in Denver, Colorado