

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 6626

Petition of BT Group plc, British Telecommunications)
plc, and Concert Communications Sales L.L.C. for)
Approval of a Transfer of Control)
)

Order entered: 1/23/2002

I. INTRODUCTION

This case involves a petition filed on November 29, 2001, by BT Group plc and British Telecommunications plc (jointly "BT Affiliates"), and Concert Communications Sales L.L.C. ("Concert") (collectively the "Petitioners"), seeking Vermont Public Service Board ("Board") approval under 30 V.S.A. § 107, for approval of a transfer of control resulting from the acquisition of an additional 50 percent of the ownership of Concert by BT.

On January 8, 2002, the Vermont Department of Public Service ("Department") submitted a letter to the Board indicating that the Department had no objection to the transfer of control. The Department noted that the transaction would be transparent to Concert's Vermont customers and would allow Concert to continue to operate under its existing Certificate of Public Good. Further, the Department also had no objection to the issuance of an order without hearing or further investigation, as provided under 30 V.S.A. § 107.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

Based upon the petition and accompanying documents, the Board makes the following findings of fact.

1. Concert received a Certificate of Public Good to provide telecommunications services in Vermont in Docket No. 6237, on April 18, 2001. The BT Affiliates are not authorized to provide telecommunications services in Vermont. Petition at 1 and Exhibit A.
2. Concert is currently 50 percent owned by the BT Affiliates. Under the proposed transaction, the BT Affiliates will acquire an additional 50 percent ownership interest in Concert, resulting in Concert becoming 100 percent indirectly owned by the BT Affiliates. Following the

transaction, Concert will continue to operate in all respects as it currently operates, pursuant to existing operating authority. Neither the name of nor the terms and conditions of service offered by Concert will be affected by the transaction. Petition at 1-3.

3. Completion of the proposed transaction will promote the public interest in that it will promote competition among telecommunications providers by providing Concert to act more efficiently, thus strengthening its competitive position and enabling it to pursue marketing and business plans more effectively. Petition at 3.

III. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISCUSSION

The proposed transaction requires Board approval under 30 V.S.A. § 107, which applies to a direct or indirect acquisition of a controlling interest in a Vermont utility.¹ Under Section 107, a "controlling interest" is defined as 10% or more of the outstanding voting securities of a company. Section 107 requires a finding that the transfer of control will promote the public good. This standard is met in this case. The proposed transaction will promote the public good, because the indirect transfer of control of Concert will allow it to operate more efficiently. In the competitive arena of telecommunications, the overall effect of this transfer may promote more customer choice in terms of services, with stronger competitors in the Vermont telecommunications market. It should also be noted that the transfer of control will not have an adverse impact on Vermont consumers as Concert will continue to operate according to its present authority.

For all of the above reasons, the proposed indirect transfer of control of Concert should be approved.

1. Approval under 30 V.S.A. §§ 231 and 311 is not required because the current holder of the Certificate of Public Good will continue to be the entities providing telecommunications service in Vermont.

IV. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED by the Public Service Board of the State of Vermont that:

1. The indirect transfer of control of Concert Communications Sales L.L.C., is approved.
2. Petitioners shall file a letter notifying the Board of the completion of the transaction within one week of such completion.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont, this 23rd day of January, 2002.

<u>s/Michael H. Dworkin</u>)	
)	PUBLIC SERVICE
)	
<u>s/David C. Coen</u>)	BOARD
)	
)	OF VERMONT
<u>s/John D. Burke</u>)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: January 23, 2002

Attest: s/Susan M. Hudson

Clerk of the Board

NOTICE TO READERS: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Board (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: Clerk@psb.state.vt.us).

Appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Vermont must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within thirty days. Appeal will not stay the effect of this Order, absent further Order by this Board or appropriate action by the Supreme Court of Vermont. Motions for reconsideration or stay, if any, must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within ten days of the date of this decision and order.