

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH

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NEWS RELEASE

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**NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION ISSUES ORDER APPROVING
INCREASE OF SURCHARGE FUNDING FOR THE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE (TRS)**

The North Carolina Utilities Commission today approved a 4 cent increase in the monthly surcharge for the Telecommunications Relay Service in Docket No. P-100, Sub 110. The Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) was established in 1991 by the North Carolina General Assembly to enable the hearing and speech impaired to have better access to the telephone network. In the past ten years, TRS has profoundly enhanced the quality of life for the citizens of North Carolina by delivering communications services to the hearing and speech impaired. North Carolinians who are deaf, hard of hearing, vision or speech impaired use TRS to communicate with family, friends, or business associates through special telecommunications devices, such as text telephones (TTY). In addition to this service, TRS provides access to telecommunications devices for North Carolinians who are deaf, hard of hearing, vision impaired, and speech impaired, but who have difficulty affording these devices. More and more North Carolinians are using TRS every day.

TRS is made possible through the TRS surcharge collected by the local telephone companies each month on all local exchange residential and business telephone lines. For the past seven years, the surcharge was \$.07 per month per access line. Since TRS has grown over the past seven years, the Commission today increased the monthly surcharge to \$.11 per month to allow TRS to continue to provide its services to those citizens of North Carolina who are hearing impaired, vision impaired, or speech impaired. This surcharge increase, with a brief explanation of the TRS program, will be included in consumers' January telephone bills.