

subject of the proceeding, if the system and affiliated company were a small system and small company respectively as of the June 5, 1995 and as of the period during which the disputed rates were in effect. However, the validity of a final rate decision made by a franchising authority before June 5, 1995 is not affected.

(10) In any proceeding before the Commission involving a cable programming services tier complaint in which a final decision had not been issued as of June 5, 1995, a small system owned by a small cable company may elect the form of rate regulation set forth in this section to justify rates charged prior to the adoption of this rule and to establish new rates. For purposes of this paragraph, a decision shall not be deemed final until the operator has exhausted or is time-barred from pursuing any avenue of appeal, review, or reconsideration.

(11) A system that is eligible to establish its rates in accordance with the small system cost-of-service approach shall remain eligible for so long as the system serves no more than 15,000 subscribers. When a system that has established rates in accordance with the small system cost-of-service approach exceeds 15,000 subscribers, the system may maintain its then existing rates. After exceeding the 15,000 subscriber limit, any further rate adjustments shall not reflect increases in external costs, inflation or channel additions until the system has re-established initial permitted rates in accordance with some other method of rate regulation prescribed in this subpart.

NOTE: For rules governing small cable operators, see § 76.990 of this subpart.

[60 FR 35865, July 12, 1995, as amended at 60 FR 52120, Oct. 5, 1995; 62 FR 53576, Oct. 15, 1997; 64 FR 35950, July 2, 1999; 65 FR 53617, Sept. 5, 2000; 67 FR 13235, Mar. 21, 2002]

§ 76.935 Participation of interested parties.

In order to regulate basic tier rates or associated equipment costs, a franchising authority must have procedural laws or regulations applicable to rate regulation proceedings that provide a reasonable opportunity for consideration of the views of interested parties. Such rules must take into ac-

count the 30, 120, or 180-day time periods that franchising authorities have to review rates under § 76.933.

§ 76.936 Written decision.

(a) A franchising authority must issue a written decision in a rate-making proceeding whenever it disapproves an initial rate for the basic service tier or associated equipment in whole or in part, disapproves a request for a rate increase in whole or in part, or approves a request for an increase in whole or in part over the objections of interested parties. A franchising authority is not required to issue a written decision that approves an unopposed existing or proposed rate for the basic service tier or associated equipment.

(b) Public notice must be given of any written decision required in paragraph (a) of this section, including releasing the text of any written decision to the public.

§ 76.937 Burden of proof.

(a) A cable operator has the burden of proving that its existing or proposed rates for basic service and associated equipment comply with 47 U.S.C. 543, and §§ 76.922 and 76.923.

(b) For an existing or a proposed rate for basic tier service or associated equipment that is within the permitted tier charge and actual cost of equipment as set forth in §§ 76.922 and 76.923, the cable operator must submit the appropriate FCC form.

(c) For an existing or a proposed rate for basic tier service that exceeds the permitted tier charge as set forth in §§ 76.922 and 76.923, the cable operator must submit a cost-of-service showing to justify the proposed rate.

(d) A franchising authority or the Commission may find a cable operator that does not attempt to demonstrate the reasonableness of its rates in default and, using the best information available, enter an order finding the cable operator's rates unreasonable and mandating appropriate relief, as specified in §§ 76.940, 76.941, and 76.942.

(e) A franchising authority or the Commission may order a cable operator that has filed a facially incomplete form to file supplemental information, and the franchising