



# Department of Justice

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## **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ASKS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT BELL OPERATING COMPANIES' ENTRY INTO LONG DISTANCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice is asking all interested parties to submit position papers addressing several important questions relating to the impact of the Bell companies' entry into the long distance services market.

Joel I. Klein, Acting Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division, said that the submissions would assist the Department in developing a general analytical framework for evaluating the Bell companies' applications to provide in-region long distance service.

"This process is extremely important," said Klein, "and we want to get as much input and provide as much guidance as possible."

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Department will consult with and provide comments to the Federal Communications Commission--which must give "substantial weight" to the Department's evaluation in determining whether to grant or deny any Bell Company application to provide long distance service within its region.

Klein further commented that, once the Department has developed its approach to considering the various applications, he intends to explain publicly the Department's analytical framework in order to set out under what conditions the Department will support Bell entry into long distance services.

All interested parties are invited to address the questions outlined in the attached letter and submit their response by December 13, 1996.

The response should not exceed 25 pages, and should be submitted to Don Russell, Chief of the Telecommunications Task Force, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 555 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 8104, Washington, D.C. 20001.

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