

Josh Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General



P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2021

**Wisconsin, FTC, 5 Other States & Counties Sue Frontier Communications
for Misrepresenting Internet Speeds**
Company failed to deliver promised DSL Internet speeds

MADISON, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Josh Kaul and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary-designee Randy Romanski, along with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and five other states and counties, sued Internet service provider Frontier Communications, alleging that the company did not provide many consumers with Internet service at the speeds it promised them, and charged many of them for more expensive and higher-speed service than Frontier actually provided.

“Wisconsinites should receive the Internet service speed they’re paying for,” said Attorney General Kaul. “When companies fail to live up to their promises, the consumer protection teams at DATCP and DOJ are available to stand up for consumers.”

“Whether for work, education, health care, or any other purpose, quality internet access is a necessity,” said DATCP Secretary-designee Randy Romanski. “Customers deserve to get the high-speed internet they’ve paid for. DATCP’s Bureau of Consumer Protection is proud to serve as a resource to Wisconsin consumers and step in when consumers are negatively affected by unfair business practices.”

In a [complaint](#), the government alleges that Frontier advertised and sold Internet service in several plans, or tiers, based on download speed. Frontier has touted these tiers using a variety of methods, including mail and online ads, and has sold them to consumers over the phone and online.

In reality, the complaint alleges, Frontier did not provide many consumers with the maximum speeds they were promised and the speeds they actually received often fell far short of what was touted in the plans they purchased. **DATCP received thirty complaints from Wisconsin consumers regarding internet speed or service.**

The FTC's allegations concern Frontier's Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) Internet service, which is transmitted over copper telephone wires. Frontier provides DSL service to approximately 1.3 million consumers, many in rural areas, across 25 states. Since at least January 2015, thousands of consumers complained to Frontier and government agencies that the company failed to provide DSL Internet service at the speeds they were promised. Many consumers have complained that the slower speeds actually provided by Frontier failed to support the typical online activities they should have been able to perform at the speed tiers Frontier had sold to them.

In addition to Wisconsin, the complaint was filed with the attorneys general from Arizona, Indiana, Michigan, and North Carolina, as well as the district attorneys' offices of Los Angeles County and Riverside County on behalf of the State of California.

The complaint alleges that Frontier violated the FTC Act and various state laws by misrepresenting the speeds of Internet service it would provide consumers and engaged in unfair billing practices for charging consumers for a more expensive level of Internet service than it actually provided.

The Commission vote authorizing the staff to file the complaint was 4-0. The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

NOTE: The Commission files a complaint when it has "reason to believe" that the named defendants are violating or are about to violate the law and it appears to the Commission that a proceeding is in the public interest. The case will be decided by the court.

Consumers with concerns about unfair and deceptive business practices can file a complaint with DATCP's Bureau of Consumer Protection online at www.datcp.wi.gov or through the toll-free hotline at (800) 422-7128.