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CITY OF  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**

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## *NEWS RELEASE*

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **QWEST'S NEW LAWSUIT AGAINST CITY COULD ERODE SCHOOL BUDGETS**

Portland, OR

Yesterday, a subsidiary of Qwest [Qwest Corporation (QC)] filed a lawsuit to have the operation of the City's telecom services declared illegal.

"On the first day of school, Qwest welcomes back our students with a lawsuit that could dramatically increase Portland's schools costs for high speed internet access." said Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

The City's telecom operation, referred to as IRNE (Integrated Regional Network Enterprise), is a high speed and low cost alternative for local government and school's telecommunication services.

IRNE also connects Multnomah County and the Port of Portland to the 911 emergency Center and to downtown Portland police headquarters. It also provides neighboring cities a secure communication fiber infrastructure system that connects directly to the city's crime data computer.

The challenge is one of many Qwest Corporation has pursued to limit or ban local municipalities from providing their own telecommunication services. In the Portland area, the IRNE system has lead to significant savings, especially for local school districts. According to the Multnomah Education Service District, IRNE has increased its system capacity by 66%, improved system reliability, and decreased previous telecom costs by 33%.

The City of Portland plans to continue the ongoing defense of this cost saving program. The City is currently defending a suit from a Qwest affiliate, QCC and Time Warner to ban IRNE's services to the Portland region's local governments and school districts.

The Citizens Utility Board of Oregon has also rejected Qwest lawsuit. "We think the City of Portland ought to have the ability to lower cost for its communication services and needs" says Bob Jenks.