

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Digital Gap: Senators Say Mobile Not a Substitute for Fixed Broadband

Concerned that the **FCC** is teeing up mobile broadband as a substitute to fixed, a group of Democratic senators is asking the FCC to extend the comment period by 30 days in its annual inquiry into broadband capability to all Americans. "We believe that such substantial shifts in policy require greater consideration and debate, something that the current schedule for comment does not allow," said the letter from Sens *Al Franken* (D-MN), *Amy Klobuchar* (D-MN), *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT), *Elizabeth Warren* (D-MA) and other members of the Commerce committee. Groups such as **INCOMPAS**, **Public Knowledge** and the **American Library Assn** also banded together to ask for more time—at least an eight-week extension. . So far, there's been no indication that the FCC will change Thursday's comment deadline. The FCC's inquiry notice from last month noted that as of the beginning of 2016, approximately 80% of American mobile subs used smartphones, and that the 19th Mobile Competition Report found most of the US population resides in an area with LTE coverage from at least one service provider and that median download speeds during the second half of 2015 ranged from approximately 8 Mbps to 15 Mbps. That compares to the FCC's policy of 25 Mbps/3 Mbps for fixed broadband. In its inquiry, the FCC asks for comment on a potential 10 Mbps/ 1 Mbps benchmark for mobile and asks if an area should be deemed served if mobile or fixed service is available. "In reading this notice of inquiry, it appears that the FCC, by declaring mobile service of 10 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload speeds sufficient, could conclude that Americans' broadband needs are. In reading this notice of inquiry, it appears that the FCC, by declaring mobile service of 10 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload speeds sufficient, could conclude that Americans' broadband needs are being met," the senators wrote in their Aug 31 letter to FCC commissioners. **CWA** already has weighed in, saying that evaluation of price, functionality, reliability and consumer usage patterns continue to support the Commission's 2016 conclusion that fixed and mobile are not functional substitute for one another.

**Raycom-DirecTV:** At press time, it was still unclear what would happen at midnight when **Raycom's** retrans extension with **DirecTV** expired. With a potentially catastrophic Category 5 storm headed toward Florida, another extension may be possible. The broadcaster cited Harvey and the importance of local programming during last week's extension, which coincided with Harvey. Raycom has stations in West Palm Beach and Sarasota, FL, as well as Myrtle Beach, SC.

**DACA Reax:** Companies in the entertainment space were sounding off Tuesday on President *Trump's* plan to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in six months. "Rescinding DACA is cruel and misguided. Dreamers contribute to our economy and our nation. Congress must act fast to protect them!" **Disney** CEO *Bob Iger* said on **Twitter**. Recall that Iger quit the White House advisory council over Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate agreement. **Univision** and **Telemundo** also weighed in. "Here at UCI we will continue to stand by them, including those talented DREAMers working at our company to advance our mission of entertaining, informing, and empowering the Hispanic

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community and the rising American mainstream we serve. Their stories are unmistakably American. They deserve better than this,” pres/CEO *Randy Falco* said in a statement that called on Congress to step in and work in a bipartisan fashion to protect the program and enact meaningful immigration reform. Similarly, Telemundo released a statement saying it was disheartened by the move. “In addition to the human impact of this decision, repealing DACA will result in the loss of thousands of jobs in the United States and billions of dollars in economic growth over the next decade,” the Spanish-language programmer said. “We urge Congress to act swiftly to preserve the rights of these valuable members of our community. All of our elected representatives should be held accountable toward this end.” It wasn’t clear if Telemundo parent Comcast would address the topic as well. A request for comment had not been returned at press time. **HLN** broke the story of US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce pres *Javier Palomarez’s* resignation from the White House Diversity Council, with the leader announcing his resignation live on the network during an interview.

**More Buying for TDS:** TDS reached a deal to purchase **K2 Communications** for an undisclosed amount. The deal adds more than 1200 homes passed to the adjacent Berthoud and Johnstown, CO, service areas, acquired by TDS in 2013 through its **Baja Broadband** purchase. Once the deal closes, TDS expects to quickly accelerate broadband speeds and modernize video products. Formed in 2002, K2 serves the Mead, CO, market. The pending purchase comes just one month after TDS announced its intent to acquire **Crestview Cable**, which is adjacent to its **Bend Broadband** property.

**Hurricane Season:** FCC commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* called on the Commission to study Harvey’s impact on the communications structure, much like it did in the wake of Katrina in 2005. “That report must include a full plan for fixing the vulnerabilities that we are finding—from overloading 911 systems to out-of-service cell sites. It should also include a framework for rebuilding so that the communities that have been impacted are not permanently relegated to the wrong side of the digital divide,” she said. FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* was slated to visit areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey Tuesday, even as another powerful storm was threatening Florida and the Caribbean. On Saturday, the FCC deactivated its Disaster Information Reporting System in Texas and Louisiana except for 13 Texas counties: Aransas, Calhoun, Chambers, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Matagorda, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Patricio, Victoria and Wharton. Communications providers in those counties in the active area have to provide info on the status of communications equipment, restoration efforts, etc. The FCC’s Tuesday report shows there were at least 153K subs out of service from cable system and wireline providers in those areas, down from 158K on Monday. Two TV broadcasters were out of service over the weekend—**KFDM** and **KBTB**—but were back up Tuesday. KBTB is at reduced power, while KFDM is using an alternative transmitter. In the 13 counties remaining in the disaster area, 1.73% of cell sites were out of service and only three counties have greater than 10% of cell sites out of service.

**‘Hand in Hand’ for Harvey:** Houston rapper *Bun B* and **SB Projects** founder *Scooter Braun* are partnering on a telethon to aid the victims of Hurricane Harvey. “Hand in Hand: A Benefit for Hurricane Harvey Relief” will be a one-hour special based in L.A., but will also feature performances from artists in New York, Nashville and shots from *George Strait’s* San Antonio benefit concert. “Hand in Hand” will air live on **ABC, CBS, CMT, Fox** and **NBC** on Sept 12 at 8pm ET (8pm PT replay). It also will be streamed live on **Facebook, YouTube** and **Twitter** during the East Coast broadcast.



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