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What the Industry Reads First

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The Proposals: Groups Behind C-Band Plans Go Head-to-Head

A **House Commerce** hearing on spectrum policy Tuesday quickly became the stage for a showdown between the **C-Band Alliance** and the **Competitive Carriers Association** on their respective C-band spectrum reallocation proposals. The ways in which the proposed plans vary are endless: the timing in which they could be executed, whether the spectrum would be allocated via private sale or **FCC** auction, even the amount of spectrum being freed up for new licensees. Perhaps the biggest question behind all of the proposals is how much spectrum is enough to be allocated for wireless use to meet US midband needs for 5G. According to CCA (which has put forth a joint proposal with **Charter Communications** and **ACA Connects**), the Alliance's plan won't provide enough to build a competitive 5G marketplace across America. "You really in this spectrum need a minimum of 60Mghz or so—more is better—to provide a meaningful service," CCA svp, legislative affairs *Tim Donovan* said. "If you only free up 180Mghz for wireless use, that's a maximum of three licenses. If we want to talk about putting spectrum in the hands of competitors that serve rural areas, that's not enough to go around." Wireless Future Project director *Michael Calabrese* from the **Open Technology Institute at New America** stood against the Alliance plan, saying it would set a "terrible precedent" for future spectrum reallocations. "We're moving into an era where all the new spectrum we make available is going to be in bands that are in use, but underutilized," he said. "The Commission has the authority to consolidate them, modify licenses... we should take advantage of that." The Alliance's head of advocacy & government relations *Peter Pitsch* argued that its proposal would free up spectrum faster than the fiber-based proposals while not being opposed by the nation's largest programmers. The Alliance, whose members include **Intelsat**, has predicted that should its proposal be approved, spectrum assignments could be announced by early 2020. "It's important to realize that on some of those fiber-based proposals, **Disney, Fox, Discovery, CBS** and **Viacom** have all said they do not think that that fiber solution is appropriate," Pitsch said. "Under our approach, the members of this committee will be able to look at one entity who will be fully accountable for clearing spectrum quickly for 5G and make sure that all of those viewers and listeners at home are getting **ESPN** and **NPR**." There are still some major questions surrounding the Alliance's plan. Of particular concern to lawmakers was a segment that would have spectrum holders that relinquish spectrum to make voluntary donations to



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the Treasury, and whether the FCC would have the ability to enforce that. Pitsch argued that the Commission would have such authority if it placed certain conditions on the Alliance's plan for allocating C-band spectrum. Lawmakers and some of the other witnesses weren't so sure, with Calabrese saying it is beyond the FCC's power to require such voluntary payments. "It's clear that there are competing applications here for licenses that puts them within Section 309(j) [of the Communications Act]," Calabrese explained. "That requires an auction. Section 309(j)(8)(A) requires every bit of revenue go to the Treasury. This won't be eligible as an incentive auction, so I just don't see it working."

CBS is the Latest at Odds with AT&T: AT&T has 99 problems, and it seems like they all are retrans related. **CBS** is the latest to lob a grenade at the distributor, warning **DirectTV**, **DirectTV Now** and **AT&T U-verse** customers that they could lose **CBS** and **CW O&Os** as of Saturday. Cable nets **CBS Sports Network** and **Smithsonian** on **DirectTV** could also be impacted if there is a blackout. **CBS** has O&Os in 19 markets, with 14 cities actually at risk of losing a **CBS** station. Of those 14, nine have **Locast** available—L.A., San Fran, Denver, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, NYC, Philly and Dallas. Recall that AT&T recently made a \$500K donation to **Locast** parent **Sports Fans Coalition NY**. **Locast** is a free service that lets consumers stream local TV stations. In messaging that started Tuesday, **CBS** urged viewers to reach out to AT&T via social media or by calling 1-855-5-Keep-CBS. "CBS would like to avoid being dropped, but unless a fair agreement is reached our viewers should be prepared for **DIRECTV** and **AT&T U-verse TV** to remove **CBS**-owned television stations," **CBS** told viewers. AT&T, which currently has blackouts with **Nexstar** and various independent broadcast groups, took a swipe at broadcasters as a whole. "We are fighting on behalf of our customers in these negotiations with broadcast station owners and national networks. Customers today are demanding more value from their TV offerings. We must convince companies like **CBS** and **Nexstar** to accept the same call to action that our own TV customers have made clear," read a company statement. "Broadcast stations are the incumbents to our industry, and many feel they deserve certain entitlements. They continue to give their signals away for free but also demand unsustainably growing fees for allowing customers the convenience of receiving their channels in a usual program guide or without switching an input."

Hitz Launches on Comcast: Today's the day that commercial-free, on demand service **Hitz** begins rolling out on **Comcast** to replace **Cinemax** in some packages. **Hitz** features more than 200 different movies from a variety of studios, with new content rotating in each month. At launch, **Hitz** is offering up films such as "Godzilla," "Something's Got to Give" and "District 9." **Hitz** is replacing **Cinemax** and its associated channels in the **Xfinity Premier** and **Super** packages as well as certain other packages. Some packages will still feature **Cinemax** and customers can subscribe to the premium net on an a la carte basis for \$12/month.

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Emmy Favor Shines on HBO, Pop: Not only did **HBO** take back the Primetime Emmy nomination lead from **Netflix**, its 137 noms are the most of any network ever. It beats the previous record that HBO set in 2015 with 126. **Netflix** isn't crying in its champagne though, netting 117 nominations. That's up from the 112 it scored last year. Helping HBO retake the crown was "Game of Thrones," which received a whopping 32 nods, 10 more than in 2018 and the most for any program in a single season—beating a 25-year standing record set by "NYPD Blue." It was followed by **Amazon's** "The Marvelous Mrs Maisel," (20), HBO's "Chernobyl" (19), **NBC's** "SNL" (18), HBO's "Barry" (17), **FX's** "Fosse/Verdon" (17) and Netflix's "When They See Us" (16). This year's nominations was a big one for the underdogs, with **Pop TV** earning its first nominations ever. "Schitt's Creek," which will air its sixth and final season next year, scored 4 noms—Outstanding Comedy Series, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series for *Eugene Levy*, Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for *Catherine O'Hara*, and Outstanding Contemporary Costumes. Pop TV pres *Brad Schwartz* has been aggressively lobbying for Emmy recognition on social media. "I think we've been pretty supportive of the show when it comes to the Emmys every year, but I think it's like compounded interest. Every year, the show gets a little bit bigger. Every year, the show gets more fans," he told **Cablefax**, which awarded it Best Comedy series for the past two years in the Cablefax Program Awards. "It built to a crescendo this year, and deservedly so, because every season has been better than the one before." The show may be exiting next year, but Schwartz refused to call the Emmy recognition bittersweet. Instead, he said it's the cherry on top and signals more great things for Pop, which recently became fully owned by CBS and announced the pick-up of canceled Netflix series "One Day at a Time." "It will turn Season 6 into must-watch television every week," Schwartz said. "I think we have a huge future in front of us. Much like **AMC** was able to replace 'Mad Men' and Netflix was able to build off of 'House of Cards'... I think this is the beginning of a roll for us." Speaking of **AMC Networks**, the programmer has two shows (AMC's "Better Call Saul" and Emmy newcomer **BBC America's** "Killing Eve") in the running for Outstanding Drama, competing against GOT, NBC's "This is Us" and newcomers "Pose" (FX), "Bodyguard," "Ozark," (both Netflix) and HBO's "Succession." Cable nets and streamers with double-digit nominations in the Emmys include AMC (11), **CNN** (17), FX Networks (32), **Hulu** (20), **Nat Geo** (13), Amazon Prime (47), **Showtime** (18) and **VH1** (14).

Senators Call FTC's Reported \$5bln Facebook Fine Small Change: Not everyone's happy with a **WSJ** report indicating that the **FTC** has endorsed a \$5bln settlement with Facebook over its privacy practices. Sens *Ed Markey* (D-MA), *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT) and *Josh Hawley* (R-MO) wrote to the FTC Tuesday regarding the reports, expressing their concerns that such a settlement would be "egregiously inadequate" given the number and severity of Facebook's privacy violations. The senators asked for answers regarding the FTC's process in determining the size of the fine, if it will name Facebook head *Mark Zuckerberg* in the settlement and if it will impose restrictions on Facebook's upcoming Libra cryptocurrency.

Atlantic Broadband Gets More Giggy: **Atlantic Broadband** is well on its way to offering Gigabit speeds to most of its 11-state footprint by year-end. It's now expanded gigabit deployment into Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York. The MSO already offers gigabit speeds in Connecticut, Miami, New Hampshire/Maine, Southern Maryland and Aiken, SC.

ESPN's Home Run Derby Scores in Weekly Ratings: **ESPN's** Home Run Derby telecast last Monday was the most-watched program of the week, delivering 5.41mln viewers in L+SD. The number when **ESPN2** is combined hit 6.2mln, up 4% from last year's 5.9mln across both nets. ESPN also saw a strong showing for Sunday's Men's finals Wimbledon coverage, which netted 3.33mln viewers. Impressive, but not enough to surpass Wednesday's ep of "Hannity" on **Fox News** (3.35mln). For those keeping score, Fox News was basic cable No 1 net in total viewers for primetime and total day for the eighth consecutive week (2.33mln viewers, 1.32mln, respectively). Rounding out the week's top 5 nets in prime were: **MSNBC** (1.58mln), **ESPN** (1.46mln), **HGTV** (1.28mln), and **TLC** (1.14mln). The only non-news or sports program to make Nielsen's Top 10 ranking for the week? **TLC's** "Dr Pimple Popper," with 3.21mln viewers L+SD for Thursday.

People: **HGTV** is bumping *Karen Bronzo* into the role of svp, marketing, expanding her role to include oversight of brand strategy and development of on-air/off-channel creative for the network. Bronzo, who joined the net in 2013, will report directly to HGTV pres *Jane Latman*. -- **Public Knowledge** has named *Chris Lewis* the organization's next pres/CEO. Lewis spent the last decade working in technology policy at the FCC while also serving as vp at Public Knowledge. He takes over for *Gene Kimmelman*, who will now act as a senior advisor. Public Knowledge also promoted *Eboni Speight*, *John Bergmayer* and *Phillip Berenbroick* to the roles of COO, legal director and policy director, respectively. -- **Disney** sales vet *Janice Marinelli* is stepping down as pres, global content sales & distribution for the company's Direct-to-Consumer & International segment, ending her 34-year career with the company. Marinelli said in a statement that she had been considering the move for a while, but wanted to see the team through the integration of the **21st Century Fox** assets. Marinelli started at The Walt Disney Company's **Buena Vista Television** in 1985 as an account executive.