

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Skepticism Abounds: Viasat Raises More Starlink RDOF Concerns

It's been nearly a year since the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction, but discussion around whether **SpaceX's Starlink** broadband service can meet its commitments rages on.

Viasat is the latest to share its fears with the **FCC**, filing an ex parte this week that reiterated that numerous stakeholders across the industry and Congress have major concerns about Starlink's ability to meet RDOF demand. The fledgling service scored \$890 million in provision awards in the RDOF Phase I auction. Since then, Viasat has submitted a number of technical analyses that it says demonstrate that even if SpaceX were to deploy a full, 4,408-satellite Starlink system, it would fall short in being able to satisfy Starlink's RDOF commitments.

"Among other things, Viasat has shown that even under a 'best-case scenario in which SpaceX has absolutely zero non-RDOF-based demands for Starlink capacity,' there 'is not enough Starlink capacity (bandwidth) available in the specific geographic locations that SpaceX bid for and provisionally won' to meet its RDOF service commitments," attorneys for Viasat said in the ex parte.

Viasat also pointed to an Oct. 7 tweet by **SpaceX** CEO **Elon Musk** as evidence that Starlink will not be accessible to all customers that need to be served in the census blocks it won in the RDOF auction. In the tweet, Musk said Starlink is designed for low to medium population density and encouraged customers to sign up early to ensure a spot.

"But RDOF support is intended to ensure that all consumers in a supported area have meaningful opportunities to access broadband service, as opposed to the lucky few that are able to 'sign up early to ensure a spot,'" Viasat said. "The Commission should not award any amount of RDOF support—let alone the approximately \$890 million provisionally awarded to SpaceX—to fund a network that the operator itself admits will be incapable of meeting consumer demand."

The filing comes as Starlink is experiencing a few growing pains. The service emerged from its beta in October and is offering download speeds between 100-200Mbps. But it is now being impacted by the supply chain problems that have ravaged so many industries over the last two years.

"Silicon shortages have delayed production which has impacted our ability to fulfill orders. Please visit your Account page for the most recent estimate on when you can expect your order to be fulfilled," the company said in a Starlink support page FAQ.

If you order Starlink in areas where the service currently has both coverage and capacity, customers can typically expect to see their kits shipped within 2 weeks. Those placing an order outside of coverage areas or in areas that lack capacity receive an estimated ship date on their order page. In a number of areas, in-service estimates have been delayed into early 2023.

A number of customers also expressed major issues with an interface redesign on the official Starlink website which introduced an interactive map placing a pin on the service location provided by the customer. Some found the pin to be



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slightly off from where their service location actually is and moved it to more accurately reflect where they wanted to receive their Starlink service. Those who did so, however, found their estimated order delivery dates pushed back by months, and sometimes even years.

“Essentially, whenever you change your service address (even if it’s just a difference of a few meters), the system will treat it as a completely new order and send you to the back of the waiting list for your area,” a moderator on the Starlink **Reddit** page said.

The situation seems to have been addressed by Starlink, with an update to their support page saying that orders are fulfilled based on the date of the initial Starlink order, but the moderator still urged everyone to move their pins with caution.

SOHN FINDS A FRIEND IN HERRING

FCC nominee *Gigi Sohn* has proven to be a polarizing choice from President *Biden*, but she has at least one head of a conservative outlet behind her. In a statement posted on **One America News Network’s** website, **Herring Networks** President *Charles Herring* said he is well aware of Sohn’s personal views, but he’s even more aware of her advocacy for diversity of content in programming lineups regardless of her conflicts with that content. “She believes in the First Amendment and the advantages of a strong and open media for the benefit of our democracy. She is one of the most knowledgeable persons I know on FCC issues and has the common sense and desire to work with people on both sides of the aisle,” Herring said. “I’ve witnessed her dedication first hand and I fully encourage fellow programmers and friends across the spectrum to step

up and express their support for *Gigi Sohn*.” His support comes as other conservatives, including Sen *Lindsey Graham* (R-SC), have been [vocal](#) in their opposition to Sohn being confirmed.

FSF SAYS C-BAND ROLLOUT SHOULD GO ON

The **Free State Foundation** is the latest to call for the **FAA** to allow wireless operators like **Verizon** and **AT&T** to deploy their C-band spectrum for 5G network use. Those providers already delayed their C-band deployments by a month to January 5 after the FAA expressed its fear that such a rollout could cause interference with certain aviation equipment. The Free State Foundation is calling it all a load of hogwash. “These claims fly in the face of real-world experience in nearly 40 foreign countries where wireless services already operate in the C-band without causing harmful interference. And the Federal Communications Commission, after engaging in a deliberative process and in reliance on its spectrum engineering expertise, has reasonably determined that 5G services won’t harmfully interfere with altimeters in neighboring spectrum,” the foundation said in an email Friday. It encouraged the FAA to present any real evidence it has of 5G services interfering with altimeters to a multi-stakeholder working group that includes both wireless and aviation service providers.

PROGRAMMING

HGTV is expanding its “Home Town” franchise with the greenlight of “Home Town Kickstart.” Scheduled to premiere in 2022, the series will offer six small towns across the country the opportunity for a fresh start. A local hero will see their home revamped, a small business will be given an upgrade and a public space will get a whole new look. – **YES Network**



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QUESTIONS: Mary-Lou French at mfrench@accessintel.com

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is live streaming every home game this regular season of the Long Island Nets, the Brooklyn Nets' G League affiliate. The next home game is Friday at 7pm ET against the Capital City Go-Go. – **Discovery+** greenlit a second season of “UFO Witness.” The series will be getting eight more one-hour episodes, all of which will be available on the streaming service. – **AMC** and **AMC+** are bringing their “Best Christmas Ever” programming event back. It will run from Nov 29-Dec 25 and offer a slate of more than 55 titles and 575 hours of holiday programming. Viewers can expect all the usual favorites including “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation” and “The Polar Express.”

RATINGS

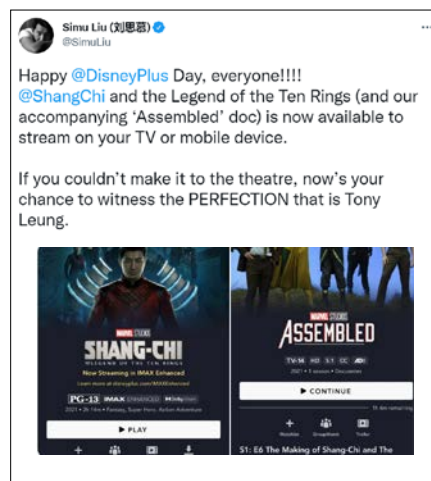
Paramount Network’s “Yellowstone” continues to be a massive hit. L+3 numbers are in for Sunday’s Season 4 premiere, and it drew 14.7 million total viewers. It was the most watched season premiere on cable since “The Walking Dead” in 2017. – **UPtv** kicked off its holiday season with its Royal Weekend of Christmas programming event from Nov. 5-7 that included the premieres of “A Royal Christmas Engagement” and “Christmas with a Prince: The Royal Baby.” Its Friday, Saturday and Sunday movies reached 3.9 million P2+ over the course of the weekend.

PEOPLE

AMC Networks upped *Anne Kelly* to EVP/Corporate Secretary and *Dawn Botti* to EVP, Legal and Business Affairs, AMC Studios and Streaming Services. Kelly joined the programmer more than a decade ago and will head corporate governance, securities and finance, compliance, cybersecurity and more. Botti, who spent more than a decade at **NBCU** before joining AMC Networks in 2015, will continue to lead all legal affairs for AMC Studios. – **MSG Entertainment** named *Jamal Haughton* EVP/General Counsel, effective Dec. 6. He’ll serve as the company’s Chief Legal Officer, overseeing all legal functions. Haughton most recently served as SVP/General Counsel at **Samsung Electronics America**.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Twitter Hits



Research

(Source: [Hub Research's "Conquering Content" Study](#))

- > Consumers are now three times more likely to discover a new show on a streaming platform than on a traditional network.
- > Netflix is still the single most common destination for new show discovery, named by 35% of viewers.
- > Exclusive shows can still attract long-term subscribers. Some 77% of those signing up to a service to watch one show end up keeping the service once they've watched.
- > 53% of TV consumers sometimes watch content from a free TV streaming service with ads.

Up Ahead

- NOVEMBER 15:** [Cable Hall of Fame Celebration](#), C-SPAN3
- DECEMBER 7:** [Cablefax Most Powerful Women Celebration](#), NYC
- JANUARY 11-14:** [CES 2022](#), Las Vegas
- JANUARY 18-20:** [NATPE Miami](#)
- FEBRUARY 13-16:** [NTCA Rural Telecom Industry Meeting + Expo](#), Dallas

Quotable

“The White House last month hailed Ms. Sohn as ‘one of the nation’s leading public advocates for open, affordable, and democratic communications networks.’ Translation: She favors deploying the agency’s regulatory power to shackle broadband providers and silence conservative voices. Ms. Sohn founded the leftwing group Public Knowledge that has long sought more government control of the internet and media. She was a counselor to Obama FCC Chair Tom Wheeler and was a driving force behind the ‘net neutrality’ regulation that classified broadband providers as common carriers under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934... Ms. Sohn’s strident partisanship should disqualify her from serving as an officer of an independent agency with so much power to control the public airwaves.”
– [The WSJ Editorial Board on President Biden’s Nomination of Gigi Sohn to the FCC](#)