

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Strength Training: House Commerce Prepares to Power Up FCC, NTIA

**House Commerce** completed a lot of work Wednesday to shape and strengthen communications regulations in Washington, advancing four bipartisan bills tied to the industry during a full committee markup.

The agenda kicked off with The Spectrum Innovation Act of 2022, legislation that in its amended form would renew the **FCC's** spectrum auction authority for 18 months. The Commission's authority is set to expire at the end of September. The bill would also establish a process for the Secretary of Commerce to identify at least 200 MHz within the lower 3 GHz band for exclusive non-federal or shared use, and requires an FCC auction of those airwaves within the next seven years.

Additionally, an amendment from Rep. *Bob Latta* (R-OH) included in the bill establishes that future FCC auction proceeds not already accounted for will be used to fund the FCC's Rip and Replace program and the transition to next-generation 9-1-1 networks. The FCC has been asking Congress for additional funding for the Rip and Replace program since it closed its application window for the program. Those 181 applications asked for a total of \$5.6 billion in reimbursements for replaced equipment, far more than the \$1.9 billion Congress had already appropriated for the program. Lawmakers have been working since then to find a budget-neutral solution to the program, landing on the use of auction proceeds.

The Commission completed an assessment of the applications on June 15, and FCC Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* told the House Communications Subcommittee in March her thoughts on potential contributing factors to the deficit. They included the fact that the estimate was based on a voluntary data collection, the expansion of the program to include carriers with 10 million subscribers or less and potential greediness from the carriers being impacted by the program.

"When we say we have a fund and we suggest that they should apply in order for us to support whatever technologies or equipment they want, it is not uncommon for us to have applicants ask for funding for things that the law does not allow," she told the subcommittee.

Latta's amendment also incorporates language from Rep. *Brett Guthrie's* (R-KY) Simplifying Management, Reallocation, and Transfer (SMART) of Spectrum Act. That legislation would allocate future auction proceeds to offset the cost of establishing an incumbent informing capability at **NTIA**, strengthening its ability to manage federal use spectrum while also making it easier to identify opportunities to make more spectrum available for commercial use. The system would also facilitate spectrum sharing between federal entities as well as federal and non-federal users.

"We will need to make smarter, more efficient users of these resources, and the SMART Act will help in that effort," Rep. *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) said. "[The Spectrum Innovation Act of 2022] is a significant piece of legislation that will not only take the



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necessary steps to make spectrum available for commercial use, but also fund critical public safety programs.”

Also making it out of the markup was the Ensuring Phone and Internet Access Through Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Program Act of 2022, a bill that would require the FCC to submit an annual report to Congress examining the number of households that qualify for Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity Program through automatic qualifying programs. It was followed by the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences Codification Act, legislation from Rep. *Buddy Carter* (R-GA) that provides statutory authority for the Institute of Telecommunication Sciences. ITS is a research and engineering lab that supports NTIA's goal of managing radio frequency spectrum. Additionally, it would require NTIA head *Alan Davidson* to establish an initiative at the agency to develop emergency communication technologies to be used to locate individuals trapped in areas where mobile connectivity may be lacking.

### ALL STATES IN ON BEAD PROGRAM

All states and territories have reached out to **NTIA** to confirm their participation in the \$42.45 billion BEAD program and the Digital Equity Planning Grant programs. It's a major milestone on the way to the deployment of the \$65 billion for broadband that was included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and it comes five days ahead of schedule. Digital Equity applications were due Tuesday, but Letters of Intent to participate in BEAD didn't need to be submitted until July 18. NTIA added that hundreds of Tribal nations have also submitted Letters of Intent indicating they'll be participating in the State Digital Equity Planning Grant program. The achievement was applauded by stakeholders across the industry, and some believe it is a sign that NTIA is acting as a good steward of the program. “NTIA is developing a track record of execution ahead of their deadlines, as evidenced by issuing the NOFOs ahead of schedule and gaining full participation well in advance of the deadline,” **Fiber Broadband Association** President/CEO *Gary Bolton* said in a statement. “This level of execution not only shows the level of commitment by NTIA, the Department of Commerce and the Administration but it also demonstrates the strong commitment by the leadership in the States and Territories to build the critical broadband infrastructure that will serve generations to come.”

### COMCAST, ALTITUDE STILL AT ODDS

A second attempt to end an ongoing antitrust lawsuit between **Comcast** and Colorado-based **Altitude TV** failed Tuesday, meaning three of Colorado's pro teams may not be available to customers for a fourth straight season. Those teams include the defending Stanley Cup Champions Colorado Avalanche, as well as the Denver Nuggets and Colorado Rapids. “We've presented options for some time to Altitude for how we could carry

## The WHO and the WHY

CFX's spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



SABRINA  
**Caluori**  
EVP, HEAD OF MARKETING AND  
BRAND STRATEGY  
NICKELODEON

### 3 THINGS TO KNOW

- Sabrina was promoted from SVP, Brand and Content Strategy to EVP, Head of Marketing. Her expanded responsibilities include overseeing brand and creative marketing, supporting content for linear networks and Paramount+ and developing consumer campaigns. She fills in for Jenny Wall—who stepped down after a three-year stint as Chief Marketing Officer—and will report to Brian Robbins, President and CEO of Paramount Pictures and Nickelodeon.
- She was with HBO for 12 years before joining Nickelodeon in August 2021, with her last position being EVP of Marketing & Digital Media. She's credited for being the mastermind behind building franchises for series like “Game of Thrones,” “Euphoria,” “VEEP” and “Big Little Lies,” which helped garner three Interactive Emmy awards.
- It's not just the shows that have received honors. Sabrina was named to Ad Age's “40 under 40” list in 2019, and before that was inducted into the American Advertising Foundation Advertising Hall of Achievement in 2016.

the games without raising rates for all Comcast customers,” Comcast spokeswoman *Leslie Oliver* [told The Denver Post](#). “We continue to remain open to continuing discussions with Altitude.”

### NETFLIX CHOOSES MICROSOFT AS AVOD PARTNER

**Netflix** has chosen Microsoft as its global advertising tech and sales partner to bring its lower priced ad-supported subscription tier to life. “Microsoft has the proven ability to support all our advertising needs as we work together to build a new ad-supported offering. More importantly, Microsoft offered the flexibility to innovate over time on both the technology and sales side, as well as strong privacy protections for our members,” COO/Chief Product Officer Greg Peters said in a blog post. He added that it is still very early days in terms of shaping the tier, but Netflix has stated that its goal is to introduce it before the end of the year.

### OPENVAULT JOINS KYRIO PROGRAM

**OpenVault** became the first member of **Kyrio's** Profile Management Application (PMA) Partner Program for the development and deployment of PMA solutions. Created by **CableLabs**, PMA leverages the programmable PHY layer to increase

the usable capacity in DOCSIS 3.1 and optimize the amount of data that can be transferred to a channel. The program will give OpenVault's research and development team access to Kyrio's libraries of profile translators and lab testing environment.

### MLB ALL-STAR WEEKEND

The Mid-Summer Classic is almost here. **ESPN** will broadcast the MLB Draft on Sunday at 7pm, followed by the Home Run Derby on Monday at 8pm. Coverage will begin at 4pm with a two-hour edition of "Baseball Tonight." **ESPN2** will have a Google Cloud-powered statcast hosted by *Jessica Mendoza* and *Mike Petriello* as an alternate Derby broadcast. Head of Baseball Production *Phil Orlins* said in a media call the network is pushing stat-powered broadcasts this year as it looks for more ways to enhance the production. The 2022 All-Star Game will take place Tuesday at 8pm on ESPN and ESPN Radio, featuring in-game interviews with players and slow-motion cameras. – **MLB Network** will have coverage of the MLB Draft as well, with a preview kicking off at 6pm. On Monday, the network will have eight hours of programming starting at noon leading up to the Home Run Derby. Following the event is the Celebrity Softball Game before coverage turns to the Mid-Summer Classic on Tuesday with "MLB Central" at noon. – **T-Mobile** will have 5G-connected roving cameras following players as they warm up for the Home Run Derby. Fans can also text "TRAVEL" to 595959 from Friday-Tuesday for a chance to win a free **MLB.TV** subscription with a 5G device and one year of T-Mobile service, \$10,000 in T-Mobile Travel credit or \$100,000 of Travel credit along with a phone and service. Additionally, MLB will produce a show over the uncarrier's 5G network for the first time.

### XUMO NABS DISTRIBUTION DEAL

Free TV platform **Xumo** launched two single-series channels after signing a distribution and licensing deal with **MPI Media**. The "Family Affair Channel" has Seasons 1-5 of the sitcom and the "Girls Next Door Channel" features Seasons 1-6, as well as the two spin-off shows "Kendra" and "Holly's World."

### NRTC CREATES VENDOR ANALYTICS TOOL

The **National Rural Telecommunications Council** unveiled its Operational Intelligence platform, a vendor analytics platform that optimizes a broadband provider's business. The platform correlates a provider's network traffic with infrastructure elements, subscribers, traffic types, security information and more in real-time. It also identifies potential service issues using machine learning and real-time data.

### FIBER FRENZY

**Breezeline** expanded its network to Dover and Madbury, New Hampshire, continuing the operator's expansion in the Granite State. Breezeline offers symmetrical speeds of 200 Mbps, 500 Mbps and 1 Gbps with no data caps. The company has fiber deployment plans for Durham later this year and began builds in Somersworth and Concord earlier this year.

### MEET SURF INTERNET

A year after **Bain Capital** acquired a majority stake in **Surf Broadband Solutions**, the Great Lakes region broadband

provider is renaming itself as **Surf Internet**. The fiber-optic internet provider updated its logo and core values and expanded its mission statement. The new logo displays "Surf Internet" with each word as different shades of blue and an arch over the "S." Surf is available in areas of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, and offers plans of 100 Mbps, 500 Mbps or 1 Gbps of symmetrical speeds.

### RATINGS

The finale of "Mi Fortuna Es Amarte" on **Univision** reeled in 2.1 million total viewers P2+ who watched all or part of the program, lifting the network to No. 1 in all of television during primetime among A18-24 and A18-49. In the last half-hour, the audience increased by 16% in P2+, 21% in A18-49 and 26% in A18-34.

### PROGRAMMING

**FX**'s "Archer" is coming back for its 13th season starting August 24 at 10pm on **FXX** and streaming on **Hulu** the next day. – **Lifetime**'s "The Bad Seed Returns" will premiere on Labor Day, Sept. 5, at 8pm E.T.

### WATCH THE OPEN IN 4K

The 2022 British Open will be available in 4K on **DirectTV**. From July 14-17, viewers can see a featured mix of holes 11, 12 and 13, as well as other interactive experiences. Channel 902 will simulcast the event from the regular **USA** or **NBC** broadcast, and channel 901 will have a four-cell combination of the featured holes and the normal telecast. Channels 904-905 will show two separate featured groups.

### CURIOSITY, IHEARTMEDIA BOW PODCAST NETWORK

**Curiosity** and **iHeartMedia** partnered to create the **Curiosity Audio Network**. It'll feature original content and podcasts that go alongside Curiosity's library of films and shows. Curiosity's "One Day University" series, which has lectures from well-regarded professors in the U.S., is currently available on the platform. The two companies will co-produce an original podcast that mixes pop culture, history and crime later this year.

### PEOPLE

*Katherine Pope* is leaving **Charter** to serve as President of Sony Pictures Television Studios. She's spent more than four years at the cable operator as Head, Original Content over its Spectrum Originals business. No word for now on who will take her place. This isn't Pope's first time leading a major studio. She ran **NBC Universal TV Studios** earlier in her career and headed the TV division of **Studio 8** prior to joining Charter. – **Telstra** made *Steve Mundt* its VP of Enterprise and Technology for the Americas. He'll oversee direct sales and new business development opportunities across the region. Mundt has over a decade of experience in the telecommunications industry. – **Viamedia** promoted *Madeline Kissel* to VP of Affiliate Relations and Business Development. She'll manage the process of identifying, pitching and negotiating of sales representation agreements with linear, digital and managed services partners in the cable and digital ad industries. Kissel has been at Viamedia since 2012.

## Think about that for a minute...

### Try It

Commentary by Steve Effros

I've never been overly impressed with reviews or polls. The inherent problem with them is that you really don't know, most of the time, from what perspective the reviewer or the poll responder is coming from.

The most obvious example of this are the political polls, which have proved remarkably wrong, repeatedly, over the years. When you see one today about government or presidential favorability, it's almost impossible to tell whether the folks taking the poll are negative because they think too much is being done, or not enough! So what does that poll really tell you?

I tend to refuse to participate in polls, especially when they don't tell me who is financing the poll. I've also started refusing to respond to the incessant email requests for a "rating" of "our service" after you have been to the doctor or the dentist or the hairdresser or whomever. I can understand it the first time I say I'm very satisfied with my haircut, and that should be enough, especially since I repeatedly go back to the same person! But the automated systems clog my email every time I go. I've just stopped responding.

The cell phone companies seem to be particularly fond of these "surveys." They'll only take five, or ten minutes of my time, and I could be eligible for a ten dollar gift certificate if I would just fill it out! Sorry, my time is worth more than that, and I really question whether the companies truly modify what they're doing based on the feedback they are asking for.

I have a much simpler suggestion for the marketers, managers and CEOs who want to know whether their service is up to snuff: try it! Get on line and go to your company website. Read what it says, play with the options, see whether it actually works the way you thought it would or should. Try it yourself! Then ask someone else in your family who is not part of the company, and maybe is not as "tech savvy" as you are, to try the "app" that your company has been promoting to all your customers. Does it really work? I can tell you there are a whole lot of them which don't!

Have you had experiences with "streaming video"? Do you really think it "works" as advertised? If so, why do you think that whenever you talk about it with friends the subject of the dreaded little "circle of dots" always comes up? Yes, we in the business know about "caching" and that many television sets and set top boxes don't really have a whole lot of temporary storage capability to handle the incoming data. Or is it a speed glitch on the broadband side? Or is it your WiFi that's having trouble? As we know, it could be any of those things. But if you don't try it yourself and experience what your customers are experiencing you won't ever truly understand why folks are not overly happy.

Don't hold me to this, but I think it was Cable Pioneer Bill Bresnan who had one of the new-fangled satellite dishes installed at the front of his office building when DBS first got started. He put televisions in the office to show what the new "digital" service looked like and how the navigation worked. His folks (or whichever other cable operator this was...) never had another question of what they had to do to compete. They had tried it for themselves.

On a totally different point, I just want to report, given that Elon Musk is now trying to back out of his purchase deal, and Twitter is suing him, that the poll I started months ago on whether the deal would ever go through is over. Too many folks guessed right!



Steve

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*(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)*



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