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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Back in Action: Broadcast, Cybersecurity and C-Band Lead FCC Meeting

The FCC's November meeting agenda didn't include the proceeding on [network/affiliate relationships](#), but it certainly was on the minds of those keeping an eye on Thursday's gathering—which still packed a punch with items regarding cybersecurity and repurposing a chunk of mid-band spectrum.

The Media Bureau's action this week is a conduit to evaluate the issues relating to local broadcasters meeting their public interest obligations, a term that has [taken prominence](#) of late. The goal is to determine whether the FCC deems the relationship between local stations and national programmers as dysfunctional, and if it does, Chairman *Brendan Carr* said the agency would keep an open mind as to how the Commission can remedy those concerns. He noted that part of enforcing the public interest is doing due diligence on the needs of a local community, hence why he's bullish on empowering local broadcasters.

"If you go back the last 10 or 20 years, the FCC has effectively, in my view, said broadcast potentially should be treated by the agency the same as cable, the same as podcasts, the same as the person on the street. And there's no public interest standard there," Carr said. "I understand, as a regulatory matter, you could say 'Let's regulate down across all these mediums.' But the fact is that's not what the law requires, and so we're trying to reinvigorate the FCC's enforcement of public interest."

Commissioner *Anna Gomez*, however, thinks the FCC "has a very limited role" in policing the relationship between networks

and local stations. She admitted she hadn't had the chance to review what the Media Bureau put out Wednesday, but her initial concern is that the proceeding is an attempt to tip the scales toward station owners. Although she didn't specifically call out **Nexstar** or **Sinclair**, she referenced their decision to preempt the late-night show "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" after **Disney** lifted Jimmy Kimmel's suspension.

Gomez was also skeptical "that meddling in the private negotiations between large networks and massive media conglomerates actually serves the public interest." To her, the public interest relies on three pillars: promoting competition, serving local communities and encouraging the diversity of viewpoints.

"It's evident that this FCC is under tremendous pressure from the White House to deliver on their threats," Gomez said.

Carr repeatedly cited public interest when asked if the FCC would act on President *Trump's* call to revoke **ABC's** license. While he didn't give a definitive yes or no answer, he continued to emphasize that the FCC would hold broadcasters accountable if they're not fulfilling public interest obligations.

"If there's nothing that you can do as a broadcaster to lose your license, then it's not a license, it's a property right. I think we have to get back to enforcing that public interest standard," Carr said.

Broadcast wasn't the only area of contention at Thursday's meeting. The FCC voted to rescind a cybersecurity-related Declaratory Ruling made in January, where the Commission—which was still led by *Jessica Rosenworcel*—sought to require

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telecommunications carriers to secure their networks from unlawful access. At the time, it proposed requiring communications providers to submit certification that they've established cybersecurity and supply chain risk management plans. It came on the heels of Salt Typhoon, described by some as the largest telecom hack in U.S. history.

While Carr claimed the ruling was rushed and misconstrued the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act, the scaling back of cybersecurity requirements drew pushback from lawmakers, including Gomez and Democratic Sens. *Maria Cantwell* (WA) and *Mark Warner* (VA). Their trepidations are that U.S. carriers remain vulnerable to state-sponsored attacks. Meanwhile, **NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association** said it was happy with the decision, calling the Declaratory Ruling “overly broad” and “burdensome” for small broadband providers.

“I am concerned that abandoning an enforceable, standards-based approach in favor of undefined ‘flexible’ solutions leaves us without a credible plan to address the gaps exposed by Salt Typhoon, including basic failures like credential reuse and the absence of multi-factor authentication for highly privileged accounts,” said Warner, who’s the Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and co-founder of the Senate Cybersecurity Caucus. “Congress, the administration and the FCC should be moving toward greater transparency and stronger protections, not less.”

Spectrum was at least a topic the three FCC leaders agreed on. They voted unanimously to move forward with auctioning mid-band spectrum in an effort to assist next-generation wireless services, while also further assessing the options for the Upper C-Band. That includes auctioning between 100-180 MHz of the Upper C-Band available for terrestrial wireless flexible use. Additionally, the draft NPRM proposes to set the existing 3.7 GHz service rules as a baseline for newly authorized terrestrial wireless operations.

ACA Connects wants to make sure small providers don’t get lost in the auctioning and reallocation process. “As it plans to reorganize the C-band, the FCC must take steps to ensure small cable providers can continue to provide video service without loss of quality or reliability and are compensated for all reasonable transition expenses,” it said in a statement.

WBD BID WATCH

All eyes are on **Warner Bros. Discovery** and the suitors bidding to buy the media giant, which set a Thursday deadline for formal bids. **Paramount Skydance** already had multiple bids rejected by WBD, including its latest offer to buy the entire company, which was reportedly valued at \$23.50 per share, but the WBD board allegedly wants Paramount to pay closer to \$30. The latest on

PSKY from the trades was that it was courting backers in the Middle East, including from Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar, to support another bid for WBD. Meanwhile, **Netflix** has also been considering a bid for WBD’s studio and streaming businesses, with [Bloomberg reporting](#) that the streaming goliath recently reassured WBD execs that it would continue to show the studio’s films in theaters if they agreed to a deal. Netflix has in the past preferred to premiere its original movies on the streaming platform as opposed to giving them a theatrical run, but WBD has contractual agreements with exhibitors to release movies at cinemas that the streamer may need to honor. All that said, someone has already called flag on the play regarding a Netflix-WBD combo, raising anti-trust concerns. Rep. *Darrell Issa* (R-CA) sent a letter to the **FTC** and **DOJ** last week. Also weighing its options is **Comcast**, which has retained an investment bank to explore an offer. The operator would look to merge **NBCUniversal** with WBD’s streaming and studio assets. Considering it’s spinning off its cable business into a separate company, it’s not surprising it doesn’t want anything to do with the linear-heavy side of WBD. Of course, this bidding war could also end with WBD going back to its original plan to split into two companies. WBD plans to make a decision on whether it’s selling or splitting up by the end of December.

AI ORDER LEAK INVOLVES BEAD

As the White House looks to establish AI-related guidelines, it appears to be gearing up to challenge rules implemented by states, and it’s using BEAD as one of the ways to prevent laws it views as too arduous. A draft of an Executive Order was [leaked](#) Wednesday by *Transformer*, revealing tentative plans to establish an AI Litigation Task Force “whose sole responsibility shall be to challenge State AI laws, including on the grounds that such laws unconstitutionally regulate interstate commerce.” It would also direct **NTIA** head *Arielle Roth* to issue a notice within 90 days specifying the conditions states must follow to stay eligible for their remaining BEAD funding. If states have AI laws that the White House considers onerous, they’d be “ineligible for non-deployment funds, to the maximum extent allowed by Federal law. The Policy Notice must also describe how a fragmented State regulatory landscape for AI threatens to undermine BEAD-funded deployments, the growth of AI applications reliant on high-speed networks and BEAD’s mission of delivering universal, high-speed connectivity.” The draft further declares that agencies should decide whether they can condition grants on states opting not to enact laws that conflict with the guidelines, or if states already have laws in place, they could choose not to enforce those regulations. **Public Knowledge** said the proposed order is both “illegal” and an “illogical attempt to bully states” into complying

In The WILD

A Cablefax feature highlighting industry doings spotted in the real world.

BravoCon Returns to Vegas

NBCUniversal's BravoCon took over the Caesars Forum in Las Vegas from Nov. 14-16, putting on a three-day superfan experience that showcased Bravo's diverse reality programming through panels, activations, parties, photo ops and more. The event, of course, featured plenty of TV host Andy Cohen, "The Real Housewives," "Vanderpump Rules," "Top Chef" and, my personal favorite, "Below Deck."

Notably, BravoCon 2025 marked the return of the event after NBCUniversal chose to skip 2024. The move also followed the decision to move the convention from NYC to Vegas in 2023. Catching up with the folks behind the show, CFX had to ask why the two-year gap and how it informed this year's gathering.



"The time gave us the opportunity to truly listen to our fans and deliver on the feedback they wanted to see—more moments to experience the Bravoverse in real life," said Kimberly Faver, SVP, Marketing and Brand Partnerships, Advertising & Partnerships, NBCUniversal. "That's exactly why we expanded our footprint with Bravo Fan Fest in Miami and Bravo Watch Parties across the country tied to show premieres and talent interactions in more intimate settings throughout 2024 and 2025. We delivered on scaling our touchpoints in new cities and at the same time continued to connect fans through custom content including live streams, in-show integrations and more."



That expansion to additional cities didn't slow things down for the main event, though. "The momentum heading into BravoCon 2025 spoke for itself," Faver added. "We saw incredible excitement from fans and brands alike, with many returning partners from Fan Fest and Watch Parties, as well as welcoming 15 new sponsors."

In fact, BravoCon's 19 brand sponsors were key to the 2025 event, powering activations throughout the weekend, including T-Mobile, which hosted a free, Bravo-packed event at its Signature Store on the Strip. Meanwhile, Wayfair joined forces with several Real Housewives to put on the "House of Housewives," a fully-shoppable home makeover activation for fans to experience.

That fan element is always the focus, according to Sari Feinberg, SVP, Marketing and Brand Partnerships, Advertising & Partnerships: "Ultimately, the goal is for fans to walk away feeling like they were part of something special, and for brands to feel like they were part of the story."

- John Saavedra

with the Trump Administration's goals. "We can agree with the President's desire for 'one Federal Standard' for regulation of AI, but only Congress can actually enact one. And they should—a framework for AI regulation is critical to ensuring consumer trust and driving innovation. Where Congress has failed to act, states have stepped up," Nat Purser, Senior Policy Advocate, said.

SPECTRUM TV'S 4K UPGRADE

Spectrum TV App users can now watch 4K programming on Apple TV and Roku devices. Charter also launched a dedicated section on the app's home screen highlighting 4K content, so that customers can easily find that programming. Additionally, Xumo Stream Box users viewing HD content that is also available in 4K will be shown an on-screen message giving them the option to switch to the 4K version. The enhanced 4K experience is available to Spectrum TV customers with compatible equipment and whose TV package includes ESPN, FOX or NBC networks carrying 4K events.

VERIZON LAYOFFS

In a memo to employees making the rounds online, new Verizon CEO Dan Schulman confirmed plans to cut the company's workforce by more than 13,000 jobs, starting Thursday, while also "significantly reducing" outsourced labor expenses. Schulman said that "every part of the company will experience some level of change" and that changes are "designed to make us faster and more focused, positioning our company to deliver for our customers while continuing to capture new growth opportunities." Verizon has set up a \$20 million reskilling and career transition fund to support employees affected by the layoffs.

FIBER FRENZY

Mediacom launched broadband services offering multi-gig, symmetrical speeds to over 2,000 households in the Maryland communities of Willards, Pittsville and Whaleyville. The ISP expects to complete the expansion by March. Customers can choose from plans ranging from 300 Mbps to 2 Gigs down.

RATINGS

The "Landman" Season 2 premiere delivered over 9.2 million streaming views in its first two days on Paramount+, an increase of 262% over the first season's debut. That makes the episode the most-watched premiere for an original series on the streamer.

PROGRAMMING

HBO has green lit "Task" Season 2, "House of the Dragon" Season 4, "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms" Season 2, "The Chair Company" Season 2 and "I Love LA" Season 2.