

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Golden State: Charter Outlines Billing, Community Benefits Post-Merger

The **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)** [asked for](#) more info on the particulars of **Charter** and **Cox Communications'** merger, and the two answered the call late Monday. In a 55-page redacted filing, the companies discussed billing, PEG channels, broadband deployment and other matters.

“The transaction will positively impact the pricing of broadband, mobile and video services for Cox customers who choose Charter packages. Depending upon the service selected and the combination of products the customer chooses, subscribers can save hundreds or even a thousand dollars per year,” the operators said.

California is the last state needed to sign off on the proposed \$34.5 billion transaction. Several groups [have asked](#) the CPUC to require Charter to provide more info on DEI policies and how they will comply with state laws, but there's been no ruling on that motion as of our deadline. Instead, Charter provided additional info to a series of questions the ALJ asked about in a March 18 order.

Charter balked at a question asking it to describe the quarterly report it would present to the CPUC and Legislature that would detail the bill reduction and amount of money saved by customers post-merger. “Charter complies with all relevant and applicable reporting requirements. Charter does not see the need to provide the type of reports contemplated by this question, nor is it aware of any similar reporting obligation in recent analogous transfer of control proceedings involving telecom-

munications providers,” it said, citing other mergers, such as **Verizon-Frontier** and **Bright House-Time Warner Cable-Charter**.

The operator said it can't present a definitive saving amount per customer on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis as the CPUC requested because the savings depends on the services and combinations bundled. “Charter's overarching strategy is to offer better-value packages and pricing options that encourage customers to select a new Spectrum plan voluntarily rather than forcing them off plans they currently enjoy,” the company said, noting existing Cox customers have the option to remain with their Cox plans if they so choose.

Charter did give some numbers, however. Introductory, promotional pricing is \$50/month less for its 1 Gbps broadband offering, and \$45/month less for its 500 Mbps broadband offering compared to Cox. Non-promotional pricing is also less—\$19/month less for its 1 Gbps plan and \$9/month less for its 500 Mbps plan.

**Spectrum Mobile** plans are “almost always” less expensive than Cox's, according to Charter. It offers \$30 per line for 30 GBs of premium data or \$40 per line for 50 GBs of premium data, while Cox offers \$45 per line for only 20 GBs of data. Cox's pay-as-you-go plan is \$15 for the first GB compared to \$20 for Spectrum's, but additional GBs of data are \$15 each for Cox vs. \$5 for Spectrum. So for a pay-as-you-go customer that uses 5 GB of data per month, it would cost a Cox customer \$75 per month, compared to \$40 per month from Charter.

Charter also comes out ahead on video, with the combined retail price of streaming services included in Charter's Spectrum TV

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packages currently up to approximately \$138/month. Streaming services in Cox's Contour packages retail for about \$75/month. The Spectrum TV Platinum plan has an advertised price of \$145/month for one year (\$175/month standard rate), while the similar Cox Contour TV Ultimate plan has an advertised price of \$189/month but doesn't feature all the streaming that Charter has.

As for a question about broadband buildouts to unserved California communities, Charter's short answer is that there aren't any in its footprint. "As noted in the Commission's BEAD Final Proposal, every BEAD-eligible location—within Charter's California service territory—is covered by a provisional award. As a result, there are no households within the Charter service territory in California that are expected to be unserved or underserved," it wrote, saying buildout plans would be duplicative and force Charter to make investments to compete against entities that "received up to 75% (or potentially higher) subsidies" to bring broadband to the estimated 5,000 locations in its footprint. It did highlight that it spent nearly \$6 billion in California on technology and infrastructure from 2020-24 and more than \$1.1 billion in 2025.

During public hearings on the merger, some speakers said the current treatment of PEG channels is insufficient. Charter downplayed the issue, saying only 1% of participants at the hearings even mentioned PEG concerns, and of those, all but one speaker represented the same organization. It noted that YouTube and other social media platforms offer alternative distribution options and said it designates PEG channel capacity for the local communities it serves and collects and remits PEG fees in accordance with all applicable requirements.

When it comes to the community, not only will Cox customers gain access to Charter's existing philanthropic programs, but Charter has committed to providing a \$50 million grant to establish a foundation to provide support in the communities where the combined company operates, including in California. It also intends to make an initial \$5 million contribution to establish an employee relief fund that assists employees experiencing financial hardship in all geographies where Charter operates.

## SENATE COMMERCE SEEKS NEXSTAR-TEGNA ANSWERS

In a **Senate Commerce** letter to **FCC** Chair *Brendan Carr*, Sens. *Ted Cruz* (R-TX) and *Maria Cantwell* (D-WA) wrote that a transaction of the magnitude of the **Nexstar-Tegna** merger, which would see the combined company reach 80% of the U.S. households, blowing far past the 39% ownership cap, "warranted consideration and a vote by the full Commission." That FCC approval instead happened through the Media Bureau "raises serious concerns about the Commission's use of delegated authority." Although Carr [signaled](#) last

week that a full vote could still happen, Cruz and Cantwell argued that the approval on delegated authority "effectively determined the outcome" and that a vote now "risks being largely procedural rather than a genuine exercise" of the FCC's duty. The letter also points out that because bureau-level decisions aren't final orders, parties challenging the merger must first seek FCC review before going to the courts. "In a transaction of this scale, where integration proceeds quickly and unwinding becomes impractical, delay in judicial review can insulate the decision from meaningful challenge," Cruz and Cantwell said. Nexstar announced the close of the Tegna acquisition on March 19, just hours after the Media Bureau approved the transaction, but the combo was [halted](#) Friday evening when a District Court sided with **DirecTV** and issued a 14-day temporary restraining order. The pay TV provider joins eight state attorneys general in suing to stop the merger, citing antitrust violations. Responding to the letter on **X**, *Anna Gomez*, the sole Dem Commissioner, [wrote](#) that "there's bipartisan agreement that the Nexstar-Tegna merger—the largest local broadcast TV transaction in history—should've been voted by the full Commission, not approved behind closed doors to help billionaire buddies bypass the law." Carr has until April 13 to respond to the Senate Commerce Committee's questions regarding how the FCC made its decision to approve the deal and how it will approach using delegated authority when considering future transactions.

## NETFLIX WANTS MORE NFL

After breaking an **NFL** streaming record last year, **Netflix** has football fever. The streaming giant, which is in its last year of a three-year deal with the NFL, wants to expand its current two-game Christmas Day package to also include a new Thanksgiving Eve matchup and an international clash at the start of the season, per a [WSJ report](#). Netflix is said to be paying about \$75 million per game under its current agreement with the league and the package is driving results for the streamer: last year's Christmas game between the Lions and Vikings delivered an average of 27.5 million viewers in the U.S., making it the most-streamed NFL game ever domestically. **YouTube** and **Amazon** are also reportedly eyeing additional games, with the NFL having a total of five games to sell—four reclaimed from **ESPN** when it sold **NFL Network** to **Disney**, plus the first international game of the season. This all comes as the FCC is [looking into](#) whether a fragmented streaming era for live sports is hurting the public and broadcasters.

## HALLMARK MEDIA PICKS NEW PREZ

In what's the second presidential change to occur in the past year, **Hallmark Media** appointed *Darren Abbott* as President. He suc-

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ceeds *John Matts*, who had been [named](#) to the role in June after originally joining Hallmark in 2022 as CFO. Matts is leaving the company, according to a spokesperson. Abbott will take over and manage ad sales, distribution and research, as well as continue with his current responsibilities as Hallmark Media's Chief Brand Officer, which includes oversight of programming, creative product development, marketing and PR, licensing and brand partnership experiences. Abbott has been credited with helping Hallmark push for more experience-driven commercial opportunities, such as the Hallmark Christmas Cruise and Hallmark Stars Live. He'll continue reporting to Hallmark President/CEO *Mike Perry*.

## AT&T UNVEILS NEW BUNDLE

AT&T introduced a subscription option that encompasses both wireless and home internet for new customers in eligible fiber-powered locations. Dubbed OneConnect, users who switch can receive a line of unlimited talk, text and mobile data and 1 Gig fiber internet for a locked rate of \$90/month. OneConnect accounts with two users can receive the mobile-internet combo for \$120/month, while family plans with three or more people run at \$225/month. AT&T also noted that the OneConnect price includes taxes and fees.

## STREAMING SUB REV UP IN 2025

Global streaming subscription revenue grew by 14% to just over \$157 billion in 2025, according to an [Ampere Analysis report](#). That's triple the rev in 2020. The firm expects that surge to continue, forecasting that streaming sub rev will grow by a further 29% over the next five years, reaching \$202 billion globally by 2030. Notably, if you include ad revenue in the 2025 sum, streaming services actually generated \$177 billion globally. Ad rev is expected to contribute a further \$42 billion annually by 2030, as more customers adopt ad-tier plans and streamers expand their ad load.

## GIGAPOWERS DROPS FCC PETITION

Gigapower and the city of Rock Hill, South Carolina, have made up. In December, Gigapower, a newcomer in the telecommunications services market in South Carolina that is jointly owned by AT&T and **BlackRock Global Infrastructure Fund**, petitioned the **FCC** for a ruling to prevent the city from implementing local requirements that it said effectively prohibit it from connecting to some 1,692 city-owned poles. On Friday, Gigapower withdrew the petition, saying the two have "reached a mutually satisfactory resolution to this dispute, and there is no longer a controversy requiring resolution by this Commission." Details weren't provided. The spat had to do with the city's implementation of a decades-old agreement with incumbent telecom provider **Comporium**, with Gigapower claiming Rock Hill asserted Comporium had a superior and exclusive right to attach to all available space on all city-owned poles.

## FIBER FRENZY

**Charter's** network expansion in Marion County, Florida, will soon connect more than 15,000 addresses to Spectrum service offering up to 1 Gig speeds. As part of its entrance into the community, the operator will award an \$18,000 grant to the Ocala-based Marion Senior Services program for its work increasing digital literacy and technology access for older adults. – **ImOn Communications** set a new company growth record in 2025, laying 532 miles of fiber infrastructure across 17 communities, an investment of over \$100 million. More than half of that investment was concentrated in southeast Iowa, including in West Burlington, Burlington, Fort Madison, Mount Pleasant and Keokuk. The expansion saw ImOn double its 2024 buildout of 265 miles.

## CARRIAGE

The Spectrum TV App is coming to **Amazon Fire TV** devices on April 15. The launch means Spectrum customers will be able to stream their full channel lineup on Fire TV as well as access features such as multiview, cloud DVR and the VOD library. The app is compatible with Fire TV devices running Fire OS 6+ or Vega OS, including the Fire TV 4K Select, Fire TV 4K Max, Fire TV Omni QLED Series, Hisense U6, TCL QM64L Series, and Panasonic Z95B.

## RATINGS

New England RSN **NESN** saw record-breaking streaming, engagement and subscription growth last week, driven by a combo of the Red Sox opening series and the Bruins' late-season playoff push. In total, NESN enjoyed a 52% increase in unique streams from March 23-29, with the Red Sox-Reds three-game series delivering average unique viewers 60% higher than last year's opening series. Saturday's matchup between the Bruins and the Wild was the most-streamed Bruins game ever on the NESN platform. This all resulted in a surge in subscriptions, with sign-ups up 31% vs last year, pushing total subs to an all-time high, up 68% from this time last year.

## AWARDS

**The Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center** announced **Comcast SVP, Network Operations Tony Speller** as the recipient of the 2026 Innovation and Intrapreneurship Award for Excellence. The award recognizes those who are visionaries and go above and beyond their expected responsibilities to drive meaningful and positive change. The award will be presented at the 29th annual **Cable Hall of Fame** celebration on April 23 at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in NYC. Speller has more than 35 years of industry experience, including leading the network ops strategy for Comcast's Connectivity & Platforms business across its 40-state footprint. He is also a Cable TV Pioneer and recently received the **NAMIC** Leader in Technology Award.