CFX DAILY

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

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DID YOU KNOW?

According to the U.K. Department of Culture, Media & Sport, PSKY-WBD would have a live linear viewing share of 12.1%, greater than Sky and Channel 4, making the combined company the third largest linear broadcaster in the country by audience share, behind just the BBC and ITV.

FCC TO VOTE ON C-BAND AUCTION RULES

CTIA was thrilled Tuesday with **FCC** Chair *Brendan Carr*'s announcement that the agency will vote July 22 on an order to auction 160 MHz of spectrum in the Upper C-Band (3.98-4.14 GHz) next year that's expected to raise billions of dollars. We'll have to wait until the draft order is released on Wednesday, but there are a few potential red flags for cable and broadcasters.

NAB had pushed the FCC to limit the auction to 100 MHz, the amount the FCC is required by statute to auction off, saying anything more risks degrading broadcast reliability, increasing fragility in the system and undermining services the public depends upon. But the FCC feels confident it can proceed with 160 MHz and accommodate broadcasters' concerns in a way that is cost-effective and technologically feasible.

NCTA members heavily use the C-Band to distribute television programming to cable systems, broadcast, streaming and other platforms for delivery to U.S. households—and to transmit live sports, news and other events from the venue to the network. The association for programmers and cable operators has called for a transition timeline of a minimum of five and a half years, with its members unable to begin their own transition steps until satellite operators have completed their part.

The FCC said under its plan, the Upper C-Band can be lit up for most Americans by the end of 2030, which falls short of NCTA's ask. The target is "years ahead of where a lot of people were thinking the timeline was going to land," Carr said in a call with reporters.

The draft item would allow winning bidders to commence wireless services in the Upper C-Band starting in December 2030 for the top-75 markets and in the remaining markets starting July 2031.

NCTA also wants to ensure that its members are reimbursed for all reasonable costs for those that will be required to transition within or away from the band. No specifics yet and we're not going to get those in the draft either as the FCC will redact detailed dollar amounts for the costs, incentives and rebates, given the sensitive nature of this type of financial info. It will release the figures publicly with the Commission's vote.

According to the agency, the draft item proposes that winning bidders will be responsible for transition costs and incentive payments for in-band licensees, as well as rebates for the purchase and installation of upgraded radio altimeters. The FCC noted the total budget is well below the low end of expected proceeds from auctioning the 160 MHz. The Commission said total incentives to satellite operators will be less in aggregate than those paid after the Lower C-Band auction, but roughly commensurate given the lower amount of spectrum being cleared.

It's not just video that needs to co-exist in the band, with the spectrum adjacent to frequencies used by aircraft radar altimeters. The **Federal Aviation Administration** worked with the FCC on the rules and said it's confident the radio signals from the auction can coexist with aviation.

Hungry for 5G spectrum, CTIA had been pushing the FCC to release rules for the auction by the end of August. "I commend Chairman Carr, the FCC and the FAA for moving quickly on the Upper C-Band," CTIA President/CEO and former FCC Chair *Ajit Pai* said. "This will be one of the most economically significant auctions of the decade, generating billions in economic growth, creating millions of jobs, expanding broadband competition and building the foundation for AI and 6G leadership. To ensure America wins the race to AI-native 6G networks in 2030, we need the same speed and decisiveness across the full 800-megahertz spectrum pipeline."

NCTA and NAB haven't responded yet to the FCC's planned vote.

BEAD HEARING A TENNIS MATCH OF BLAME

Tuesday's **House Commerce** hearing on **NTIA** oversight was a bit like watching a tennis match at Wimbledon. Republicans would lob how no one was connected to the internet via BEAD during the *Biden* administration, then Dems would volley with the current agency's delays, including in releasing how nondeployment funds can be used. Louisiana and Nebraska are the only states to have launched BEAD-funded internet household connections thus far through fixed wireless projects. Rep. *Troy Carter* (D-LA) complained that despite being first to gain NTIA approval, his state has been hampered by the agency's delay in releasing rules for how states can use an estimated $21 billion in nondeployment funds. For Louisiana, that amounts to about $800 million, which it had planned to use to expand telehealth, strengthen workforce development and help rural and underserved communities. "We're trying to get the guidance right and not just rush money out the door," said NTIA Administrator *Arielle Roth*, who said the agency plans to release nondeployment guidance this summer. That didn't sit well with Carter. "When the Biden administration was trying to get the guidance right, you said they were wasting time. You can't have it both ways." He sought assurance that Louisiana would get the full $800 million. "The states will get their money according to the law," Roth said—with Carter pushing her eventually to give a "yes" answer. There are questions, however, about whether funds will be withheld from states that enact AI regulations under an executive order issued in December. Rep. *Doris Matsui* (D-CA) pressed Roth on the matter, with the agency head saying no final decisions have been made. "The report will comply with the law," she added. Rep. *Scott Peters* (D-CA) said he was frustrated that after three years under the Biden administration, no states had projects underway from the $42 billion Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment program. But he complained that the current administration's overhaul of BEAD caused further delays. His home state and Illinois are the only ones still waiting for NTIA final proposal approval. Even if California got NTIA approval today, the next steps would take anywhere from six months to a year before any shovels could be in the ground, he said. Roth told him there were mapping anomalies and several examples in California of requests for "really exorbitant amounts of money ostensibly to serve apartments in the middle of nowhere." Peters was dismissive: "Now, instead of a three-year delay, we have a five-year delay. The witness here is blaming the states and [saying] it's hard… I hope you're not breaking your arms patting yourselves on the back saying it's better. This is the same."

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DISH DBS, DISH WIRELESS ENTER PREPACKAGED RESTRUCTURING

As expected, **EchoStar's** pay TV unit **Dish DBS** and subsidiary **Dish Wireless** filed a prepackaged Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan that would enact a previously announced Restructuring Support Agreement to pay back $8.8 billion to creditors. The plan, filed in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas, remains subject to court approval, but it targets Dish emerging from bankruptcy before the end of 3Q26. Dish TV and Sling TV operations won't be impacted, and Dish DBS hopes to get an all-trade motion to let it make timely payments to vendors, suppliers, partners, retailers and other creditors. EchoStar said the filing will permit Dish Wireless and its subsidiaries to complete the transition of their business and dispose of their remaining assets in an orderly and expedited manner, with it providing a forum for the determination of all claims against Dish Wireless and the distribution of proceeds from the sale of its remaining assets. The Chapter 11 filing will not impact the establishment of a $2.4 billion fund mandated by the FCC as part of the **AT&T** and **SpaceX** spectrum deals to address qualified claims to creditors related to the shutdown of its 5G network.

CONSERVATIVES PETITION AGAINST ABC RENEWALS

The **FCC**'s docket on the early **ABC** license renewals continued to generate heavy interest as Monday's deadline for petitions to deny passed. Nearly 60,000 filings have been submitted (it was around 56,000 as of Monday evening), including a handful of petitions from Conservative organizations such as **Center for American Rights** and **Media Research Center**, advocating for the FCC to reject the applications from **Disney**'s eight ABC stations. Others like the **Fair Media Council** remained staunch in telling the Commission the proceeding sets a dangerous precedent. CAR, a frequent guest in FCC dockets, issued a 66-page submission urging the agency to consider the rights of viewers before the stations themselves. The group claims Disney hasn't held its end of the public interest bargain and failed to showcase "diverse and antagonistic" sources. CAR and MRC both pointed out Disney's use of public spectrum in their filings, with the latter citing examples from ABC's coverage on the assassination of *Charlie Kirk*—on top of the first *Jimmy Kimmel* saga that saw his show briefly suspended. A **Frequency Forward** and **Media Action Center** joint submission offered a unique proposition: grant the station applications immediately, but if Disney agrees "to restrict its speech via negotiations with the FCC," the licenses should be revoked. "Hopefully, Disney will be able to withstand the pressure of the Trump administration's effort to control the reporting of news and other critical content on the ABC Network. However, Disney has capitulated to the Trump administration once and it may do so again. This Petition is filed to encourage Disney to resist Carr's intimidation and fight for its constitutional rights," the two groups wrote.

PSKY-WBD'S CHALLENGES IN U.K. AND U.S.

The $110 billion **Paramount Skydance-Warner Bros. Discovery** merger cleared the **DOJ** and is also on the path to a green light from European regulators, but the transaction may face a rockier road in the U.K. On Tuesday, the country's culture secretary *Lisa Nandy* sent letters to PSKY and WBD alerting them that she is "minded to intervene" in the deal on public interest grounds, expressing concern over the merger's impact on "plurality" in U.K. news media, the streaming landscape and children's television. The combined company would control British free OTA broadcaster **Channel 5**, **TNT Sports**, **Cartoon Network**, **Nickelodeon**, **CNN International**, **Paramount+** and **HBO Max**. PSKY and WBD have until July 6 to respond to Nandy's concerns. The regulator will then decide whether to step in, which could delay the closing past its 3Q26 timeline. A preliminary review of the transaction is already underway at the U.K.'s **Competition and Markets Authority**, which has until Aug. 7 to decide whether a more in-depth investigation is needed. PSKY said in a statement to the trades that it remained confident that the merger doesn't pose any media plurality issues in the U.K. and that the deal would not be delayed. – Even if the U.K. ultimately gives PSKY-WBD the thumbs up, there's still a state challenge reportedly looming on this side of the pond. California AG *Rob Bonta* has been investigating the combo for the past few months and is said to be joined in the upcoming lawsuit by a coalition including New York, Colorado, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Connecticut and Tennessee. *Puck* reported that one remedy California will demand is for PSKY to divest **CNN**. But when asked about CNN in an interview with **MS Now** over the weekend, Bonta downplayed the Puck story, saying his office is still in the midst of an antitrust analysis and no decisions have been made. At the same time, Bonta acknowledged there are "red flags" with the deal and that "we have to be concerned" about CNN being under the same umbrella as the increasingly embattled CBS.

INTREPID BUYS UBIQUITY'S SOCAL FIBER NETWORK

Fiber-to-the-premises infrastructure company **Intrepid Fiber Networks** plans to acquire **Ubiquity**'s Southern California network for an undisclosed fee. The deal will add over 35,000 fiber passings in San Diego County to Intrepid's growing wholesale open-access footprint in the Golden State. The acquired network spans the communities of Solana Beach, Encinitas, Carlsbad and Oceanside, complementing Intrepid's buildout projects in Corona, Riverside, Vista and San Marcos. Upon completion, the company's combined San Diego County network will serve more than 100,000 homes and businesses. The Ubiquity transaction is expected to close later this year, subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals.

PALEY IC SUMMIT SETS SPEAKERS

The 2026 **Paley International Council Summit** announced its initial lineup of speakers. The list includes **Liberty Global** Chairman/CEO *Mike Fries*, **NHL** Commissioner *Gary Bettman*, **Reddit** Co-Founder **Alexis Ohanian**, **Goldman Sachs** Chairman/CEO *David Solomon* and **Sony Group** President/CEO *Hiroki Totoki*. The event, which will be held at the Paley Museum in NYC on Oct. 19-21, will also feature the inaugural **Dr. John C. Malone** Annual Keynote Address. This year's edition of the Malone talk will look at "the future of media, business and technology, spotlighting the forces reshaping the industry." Registration for the summit is open here.

REPORT: FORMER DISNEY CHIEF IGER EYES NBA OWNERSHIP

Wonder what former **Disney** Chairman/CEO *Bob Iger* is up to nowadays (besides continuing to serve as a Senior Advisor and board member)? According to *Bloomberg*, he might set a pick and roll with venture capitalist *Joshua Kushner* to obtain majority ownership of the **NBA**'s future expansion franchise in Las Vegas. Both Iger and Kushner, whose brother, *Jared*, is President *Trump*'s son-in-law, hired bankers to evaluate potential bids. The league decided to explore adding two franchises—Vegas and Seattle—a couple of months ago. Iger and Kushner join *Bill Foley*, owner of the **NHL**'s Golden Knights, in vying for Las Vegas' NBA franchise.

C-SPAN'S MIDTERM COVERAGE TAKES SHAPE

C-SPAN is kickstarting its midterm election coverage with "Road to the Capitol: Candidate Coverage from the Trail," an initiative that will see the nonprofit public affairs network embed multimedia journalists in key battleground states with House, Senate and gubernatorial races. The outlet will deliver on-the-ground video coverage of top races across its platforms and will share every recorded event for free with local, nonprofit and independent media outlets. Partners can air, stream, embed or use the material however it best serves their communities. C-SPAN will initially focus on races in Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Nebraska and Texas. Funding this initiative, including the new staffer positions, are the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and More Perfect.

CARRIAGE

Peacock users can now add a **Starz** subscription through the streaming service for an additional $11.99/month. The partnership unlocks access to drama hits such as "Outlander" and "Power" and the Starz movie library for NBCUniversal's streaming customers. Later this year, Peacock will begin promoting Starz programming via dedicated rails on the app.

PEOPLE

Florida-based ISP **Summit Broadband** promoted 30-year veteran *Ernie Hoffmann* to COO. He previously served as EVP, Operations. In the new role, Hoffmann will lead Summit's end-to-end operations, overseeing construction, field services, project management, engineering, network operations, service delivery and contact center operations. Prior to joining Summit, he was SVP, Operations and Fulfillment at **FiberLight**.