

FCC to end Biden-era rule that forces ISPs to list all their fees



The groups urged the FCC to preserve machine-readable price information, saying it “clearly benefits consumers by aiding in the development of comparison shopping tools and aggregate market research.” The groups also said that “telephone-based disclosures remain essential to informed consumer decision-making” because they “serve as an important safeguard against scams and misleading offers that may reach consumers via mailers, e-mail, text messages, fake/scam websites, or robocalls.”

ISPs get what they asked for

Another planned change will eliminate a requirement that providers archive all labels for at least two years after a service plan is no longer available. The Utility Reform Network, an advocacy group, told the FCC that the archived

labels provide crucial data about how prices and services change over time, and that machine-readable labels are important for affordability research and information accessibility.

The Utility Reform Network also said that itemization of passthrough fees helps prevent bill shock. Displaying an “up to” price instead “would only serve to dilute the effectiveness of the label and increase consumer confusion around how the final price they pay is calculated,” the group said.

Cable and telecom lobby groups submitted comments supporting the FCC plan to eliminate or relax various requirements.

“The Commission correctly highlights the complexity and burdens providers have had to undertake to display all ‘charges that providers impose at their discretion, i.e., charges not mandated by a government’—including the passthrough of government-imposed fees,” USTelecom said. “To comply with this government-imposed fees requirement, providers must create and update hundreds of different labels to account for geographic variability and to ensure that their systems properly queue the label specific to the proper location when the customer inputs their address.”

USTelecom said that requiring machine-readable information is only helpful for “third-party researchers who are not the intended beneficiaries of the label” and “has no clear purpose or benefit except for third parties seeking to mine this information.”

Urging the FCC to stop requiring the listing of all fees, cable lobby group NCTA said it is burdensome “to create and maintain labels for each and every combination of government passthrough fees.” The NCTA complained that this rule and others “are unnecessary or unhelpful in informing consumers about the services that providers offer and impose an outsized

compliance burden on providers.”

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