



PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
45 L Street NE
WASHINGTON D.C. 20554

News media information 202-418-0500
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Report No. SCL-00566

**Section 1.767(a) Submarine Cable Landing Licenses, Modifications, and Assignments or Transfers
of Control of Interests in Submarine Cable Landing Licenses (47 C.F.R. § 1.767(a))**

Actions Taken Under Submarine Cable Landing License Act

By the Chief, Telecommunications and Analysis Division, Office of International Affairs:

Pursuant to an Act relating to the landing and operation of submarine cables in the United States, 47 U.S.C. §§ 34-39 (Submarine Cable Landing License Act), Executive Order No. 10530, Exec. Ord. No. 10530 reprinted as amended in 3 U.S.C. § 301, and section 1.767 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 1.767, the following applications ARE GRANTED. These grants of authority are taken under section 0.261 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 0.261. Petitions for reconsideration under section 1.106 or applications for review under section 1.115 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.106, 1.115, may be filed within 30 days of the date of this public notice.

These applications have been coordinated with the Department of State and other Executive Branch agencies pursuant to section 1.767(b) of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 1.767(b), and consistent with procedures established with the Department of State. See Review of Commission Consideration of Applications under the Cable Landing License Act, IB Docket No. 00-106, Report and Order, 16 FCC Rcd 22167, 22192-93, paras. 51-52 (2001) (Submarine Cable Landing License Report and Order); Commission Announces Department of State's Revised Procedures for its Consideration of Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, IB Docket No. 16-155, Public Notice, DA 22-435 (rel. Apr. 19, 2022).

This public notice serves as each submarine cable landing licensee's Submarine Cable Landing License, or modification thereto, pursuant to the Cable Landing License Act and sections 1.767 and 1.768 of the Commission's rules. Submarine cable landing licensees should review the terms and conditions of their licenses. Failure to comply with these terms and conditions or relevant Commission rules and policies could result in fines or forfeitures.

SCL-LIC-20241030-00042 S250468

Starfish Infrastructure Inc.

Date filed: 2024-10-30

Submarine Cable Landing License
Grant of Authority

Date of Action: 2025-07-30

Starfish Infrastructure Inc. (Starfish) filed an application for a license to construct, land, and operate the

Honomoana cable system, a non- common carrier fiber-optic submarine cable system that will connect the United States to French Polynesia, New Zealand, and Australia. On December 6, 2024, the application was placed on Public Notice. *See* SCL-LIC-20241030-00042, Streamlined Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, Accepted For Filing, Report No. SCL-00501S, Public Notice (OIA Dec. 6, 2024). On December 18, 2024, Starfish filed a supplement. On July 21, 2025, Lockheed Martin Corporation submitted a late filed comment stating that it is a U.S. licensee for polymetallic nodules in the Pacific Ocean’s Clarion Clipperton Zone, an area likely to be traversed by the Honomoana cable system, and stressed the importance of interagency coordination for these licensed activities.

Executive Branch Review.

On December 20, 2024, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) notified the Commission that it was reviewing the application and requested that the Commission defer action on the application until it completes its review. Pursuant to Commission practice, the Application was referred to the Committee for the Assessment of Foreign Participation in the United States Telecommunications Services Sector (Committee) for its views on any national security, law enforcement, foreign policy or trade policy concerns related to the foreign ownership of the Applicants. *Non-Streamlined Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, Accepted For Filing, Report No. SCL-00506NS, Public Notice (OIA Dec. 27, 2024).* *See* Process Reform for Executive Branch Review of Certain FCC Applications and Petitions Involving Foreign Ownership, IB Docket 16-155, Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd 10927 (2020). On December 30, 2024, the Committee notified the Commission that it was reviewing the application. *See* SCL-LIC-20241030-00042, Non-Streamlined Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, Accepted For Filing, Report No. SCL-00507NS, Public Notice (OIA Jan. 2, 2025).

On July 16, 2025, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), on behalf of the Committee, filed a Petition to Adopt Conditions to Authorization and License. The Committee states that it has no objection to the Commission approving authority to land and operate the Honomoana cable system, provided that the Commission conditions its approval on the assurances of Starfish and Google, LLC (Google) to abide by the commitments and undertakings of the July 11, 2025 National Security Agreement between Starfish and Google on the one hand, and the Committee, represented by DHS, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Defense, on the other hand (July 11, 2025 NSA).

Following the completion of the Committee review of the Application, the Office of International Affairs coordinated the Application with the Department of State as required by Executive Order 10530, pursuant to section 1.767(b) of the Commission’s rules, and consistent with the established Department of State procedures. Executive Order 10530, Section 5(a) reprinted as amended in 3 U.S.C. § 301; 47 CFR §1.767(b); Review of Commission Consideration of Applications under the Cable Landing License Act, IB Docket No. 00-106, Report and Order, 16 FCC Rcd 22167, 22192-93, paras. 51-52 (2001); Commission Announces Department of State's Revised Procedures for its Consideration of Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, IB Docket No. 16- 155, Public Notice, DA 22-435 (rel. Apr. 19, 2022). *See* SCL-LIC-20241030-00042, Non-Streamlined Submarine Cable Landing License Applications, Accepted For Filing, Report No. SCL-00563NS, Public Notice (OIA July 25, 2025).

Actions Taken.

1. Grant of a Cable Landing License to Starfish Infrastructure Inc. for the purpose of constructing, landing and operating the Honomoana cable system, a non-common carrier fiber-optic submarine

cable system connecting the United States to French Polynesia, New Zealand, and Australia;

2. Grant of the request for waiver of section 1.767(h)(1) of the Commission's rules in connection with the license; and

3. Grant of the Petition to Adopt Conditions to Authorization and License filed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration on July 16, 2025.

Licensee Ownership Information.

Starfish is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Google LLC, both Delaware entities. As of June 30, 2024, the 10% or greater direct or indirect interest holders of Starfish are: (1) Sea Coral Holdings LLC, a Delaware company (100% equity and voting interest in Starfish); (2) Google LLC (100% equity and voting interest in Sea Coral Holdings LLC); (3) XXVI Holdings Inc. (XXVI Holdings), a Delaware company (100% equity and voting interest in Google LLC); (4) Alphabet Inc. (Alphabet), a Delaware company (approximately 100% equity interest and more than 99% voting interest in XXVI Holdings); (5) Larry Page, a U.S. citizen (26.8% voting interest in Alphabet through ownership of 44.9% of Alphabet's Class B common stock); and (6) Sergey Brin, a U.S. citizen (25% voting interest in Alphabet through ownership of 41.9% of Alphabet's Class B common stock). Alphabet's shares are publicly traded on the NASDAQ stock market. As of June 30, 2024, no other entity or individual holds a 10% or greater direct or indirect equity or voting interest in either Alphabet or Starfish.

Cable System Design and Capacity.

The Honomoana cable system will consist of five segments: (1) the Transpacific Segment between San Diego County, California, and Victoria, Australia, a length of approximately 14,215 kilometers; (2) the Tahiti Nui Segment connecting Tahiti Nui in French Polynesia, to a branching unit on the Transpacific Segment, a length of approximately 115 kilometers; (3) the Tahiti Iti Segment connecting Tahiti Iti in French Polynesia, to a branching unit on the Transpacific Segment, a length of approximately 156 kilometers; (4) the New Zealand Segment connecting the North Island of New Zealand to a branching unit on the Transpacific Segment, a length of approximately 265 kilometers; and (5) the New South Wales Segment connecting New South Wales, Australia, to a branching unit on the Transpacific Segment, a length of approximately 464 kilometers. Each segment will have 16 fiber pairs and each fiber pair on the system will have a minimum design capacity of approximately 16.2 Terabits per second (Tb/s).

Starfish states that the Honomoana cable system will be the first system that provides a new direct connection between the continental U.S and Victoria, Australia. According to Starfish, the system will have two landing points in French Polynesia, providing path diversity and redundancy in island connectivity in case of a single branch failure.

Further, Starfish claims that the cable design will also provide resiliency by increasing the number of single end feeding configurations, provide better tolerance to shunt faults, and provide a landing in San Diego County that is physically diverse from other systems.

Ownership of the Cable System.

Starfish and its affiliates will own and control the Honomoana cable system as follows: (1) Starfish will hold 100% of the equity and voting interests in the portion in U.S. territory; (2) Sea Fan Singapore Infrastructure Pte. Ltd. (Sea Fan), a Singapore company, will hold 100% of the equity and voting interests in the portion in international waters; (3) Octopus Infrastructure SAS (Octopus), a French company, will hold 100% of the equity and voting interests in the portion in French Polynesian territory; (4) Snapper Infrastructure Limited (Snapper), a New Zealand company, will hold 100% of the equity and voting interests in the portion in New Zealand territory; and (5) Perch Infrastructure Pty Ltd (Perch), an Australian company, will hold 100% of the equity and voting interests in the portion in Australian territory. Starfish, Sea Fan, Octopus, Snapper, and Perch are all indirect, wholly owned subsidiaries of Google LLC. Starfish states that because Sea Fan, Octopus, Snapper, and Perch will not use the U.S. endpoint of the system, none of these entities is required by section 1.767(h)(2) of the Commission's rules to be an applicant for the cable landing license. 47 CFR § 1.767(h)(2).

Ownership of Landing Stations.

The Honomoana cable landing stations will be located in San Diego County, California; Tahiti Nui and Tahiti Iti, French Polynesia; North Island, New Zealand; New South Wales, Australia; and Victoria, Australia. The cable landing stations are owned and controlled as follows: (1) San Diego County, California: Elkhorn Services LLC (Elkhorn), a California company, will own a newly constructed cable landing station and Starfish will be the U.S. landing party and control the cable landing station; (2) Tahiti, Nui, French Polynesia and Tahiti Iti, French Polynesia: Sea Turtle Services (Sea Turtle), a French company, will own the two new cable landing stations, and Octopus will be the landing party and control both cable landing stations; (3) North Island, New Zealand: CDC Data Centres NZ Limited (CDC Data Centres), a New Zealand company, will own an existing cable landing station and Snapper will be the landing party and control the cable landing station; (4) New South Wales, Australia: Equinix Australia Pty Limited, an Australian company, will own an existing cable landing station, and Perch will be the landing party and control the cable landing station; and (5) Victoria, Australia: Barramundi Services Pty Ltd (Barramundi), an Australian company, will own a newly constructed cable landing station, and Perch will be the landing party and control the cable landing station. Starfish will file a more specific description of each landing point no later than 90 days prior to construction pursuant to section 1.767(a)(5) of the Commission's rules. 47 CFR § 1.767(a)(5); see also 47 CFR § 1.767(g)(8). Elkhorn, Sea Turtle, and Barramundi are all indirect wholly owned subsidiaries of Google. Waiver of 47 CFR § 1.767(h)(1).

Starfish requests a waiver of section 1.767(h)(1) of the Commission's rules so that Elkhorn is not required to be an applicant for a U.S. cable landing license for the Honomoana cable system. Section 1.767(h)(1) requires that "[a]ny entity that owns or controls a cable landing station in the United States" shall be "applicants for, and licensees on, a cable landing license." 47 CFR § 1.767(h)(1). Starfish asserts that Elkhorn will have no independent ability to affect the Honomoana cable system's operation and including Elkhorn as an applicant is not necessary to ensure compliance by Starfish with the Cable Landing License Act, the Commission's cable landing license rules, or the terms of any cable landing license. According to Starfish, Elkhorn is expected to provide certain limited services at the U.S. cable station that would not enable it to significantly affect the Honomoana cable system's operation, as these services will be provided at Starfish's direction and under its supervision.

Starfish intends to contract with Elkhorn for the right to use separately caged collocation space at the San Diego County cable landing station, and for the provision of certain operation and maintenance services at the cable landing station. Starfish states that Elkhorn is not expected to have access to Starfish's space, except: (i) to perform certain operation and maintenance services as per Starfish's direction and instructions; (ii) to conduct work in the space unrelated to the system, after providing Starfish advance notice and opportunity to supervise any such work; or (iii) in cases of emergency. The agreement with Elkhorn is expected to have an initial term of 25 years.

The purpose of the 1.767(h)(1) requirement is to ensure that entities with a significant ability to affect the operation of the cable system become licensees so that they are subject to the conditions and responsibilities associated with the license. *See* Submarine Cable Landing License Report and Order, 16 FCC Rcd at 22194-95, paras. 53-54. Although Elkhorn will own a newly constructed cable landing station in San Diego County, California, we find, based on the record in this proceeding that Elkhorn will not have the ability to affect significantly the operation of the cable system. Accordingly, we grant the Applicant a waiver of section 1.767(h)(1) and do not require Elkhorn to become an applicant/licensee for the Honomoana cable system.

Regulatory Status.

Starfish proposes to operate the Honomoana cable system on a non-common carrier basis. Starfish states that the system's capacity will be provided to affiliates pursuant to inter-affiliate agreement or made available to third parties pursuant to individually negotiated indefeasible rights of use (IRUs), the terms of which will vary depending on the characteristics and needs of the particular capacity purchase. Starfish states that it intends to install and test the Honomoana system in U.S. waters in the first quarter of 2026 and commence commercial operation of the U.S. landing point of the system in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Starfish asserts that there are sufficient alternative facilities serving the U.S.-Australia and Central Pacific routes to preclude the system from becoming a bottleneck facility. Specifically, Honomoana will compete with other existing and planned cable systems connecting the continental U.S. to Australia, including Southern Cross NEXT, Hawaiiki, and Tabua. Starfish states that each of Southern Cross NEXT and Hawaiiki also includes landings in New Zealand, and that systems connecting Guam or Hawaii to French Polynesia include the Honotua, Bulikula, and Halaihai cables.

The Applicant has provided information and demonstrated that the proposed operation of the cable on a non-common carrier basis satisfies the requirements set forth in *National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners v. FCC*, 525 F.2d 630, 642 (D.C. Cir 1976) (NARUC I), cert. denied, 425 U.S. 992 (1976). *See also* Submarine Cable Landing License Report and Order, 16 FCC Rcd at 22202-22203, paras. 69-70; Review of Commission Consideration of Applications under the Cable Landing License Act, IB Docket No. 00-106, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 15 FCC Rcd 20789, 20815-18, paras. 62-67 (2000).

Conditions and Requirements.

Starfish shall comply with the routine conditions specified in section 1.767(g) of the Commission's rules. 47 CFR § 1.767(g).

We grant the Petition to Adopt Conditions to Authorization and License (Petition) filed in this proceeding by NTIA, on behalf of the Committee, on July 16, 2025. Accordingly, we condition grant of

the application on Starfish and Google abiding by the commitments and undertakings set forth in the July 16, 2025 NSA. A copy of the Petition and July 16, 2025 NSA are publicly available and may be viewed on the FCC website through the International Communications Filing System (ICFS) by searching SCL-LIC-20241030-00042 and accessing the “Pleadings & Comments” tab in the Document Viewing area.

A failure to comply and/or remain in compliance with any of these commitments and undertakings shall constitute a failure to meet a condition of the cable landing license and thus grounds for declaring the license terminated without further action on the part of the Commission. Failure to meet a condition of the license may also result in monetary sanctions or other enforcement action by the Commission.

License Term.

Under the Commission’s rules, a cable landing license shall expire 25 years after the in-service date for the cable. The Licensee must notify the Commission within thirty (30) days of the date the cable is placed into service. 47 CFR § 1.767(g)(15). The in-service notification must be filed in ICFS through the “Pleadings and Comments” for file number SCL-LIC-20241030-00042.
