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For Immediate Release

**FCC MODERNIZES CABLE OPERATOR SUBSCRIBER NOTICE
RULES**

***Action Will Provide Subscribers with More Meaningful and Accurate Information
Concerning Changes to Cable Service***

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today issued a Report and Order adopting changes to the Commission’s rules concerning notices that cable operators must provide to subscribers and local franchise authorities (LFAs) about service and rate changes. These changes will make consumer notices more meaningful and accurate, reduce consumer confusion, better ensure that subscribers receive the information they need to make informed choices about their service options, and reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens.

This Report and Order amends the subscriber notice rules to clarify that when service changes, such as the removal of a channel, occur due to retransmission consent or program carriage negotiations that fail within the last 30 days of a contract, cable operators must provide notice to subscribers “as soon as possible,” rather than 30 days in advance. In today’s video marketplace, retransmission consent and program carriage negotiations are often concluded within days—if not hours—of the expiration of existing agreements. In these cases, it is frequently unclear, 30 days prior to the contract’s expiration, whether a new agreement will be reached, there will be a short-term extension, or programming will be dropped. This change will ensure that consumers do not receive inaccurate or premature notices about potential programming disruptions that never come to pass and that could cause them to change cable providers unnecessarily or start to ignore such notices.

The Report and Order also eliminates the requirement that cable operators subject to effective competition provide 30 days’ advance notice to LFAs of rate or service changes but retains a narrower notification requirement that applies only to rate-regulated cable operators. The Commission finds that in areas no longer subject to rate regulation, the costs to cable operators of complying with the LFA rate and service change notice requirements outweigh any potential benefits that could accrue to subscribers or LFAs as a result of these notices. Finally, the Report and Order eliminates the requirement that cable operators provide notice of changes to the information required in certain annual notices, finding that this information is available on the Internet or unlikely to be relevant to current subscribers.

Today’s Order is the 25th adopted as part the Commission’s Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative, launched in 2017, to eliminate or modify media regulations that are outdated, unnecessary or unduly burdensome.

Action by the Commission September 30, 2020 by Report and Order (FCC 20-135). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Rosenworcel, and Starks issuing separate statements.

MB Docket Nos. 19-347, 17-105, and 10-71.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).