



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR

FCC Cutting Red Tape to Unleash New Infrastructure Investments

Streamlining Process to Retire Old Copper Lines, Freeing Up Dollars for New Networks

WASHINGTON, DC, March 20, 2025—Today, the FCC is taking an initial set of actions that will help accelerate the transition from aging copper lines to modern network infrastructure in communities all across the country. These actions will help ensure that providers roll out upgraded, high-speed networks to more Americans on a faster timeline—rather than requiring providers to keep pouring resources into maintaining decades-old and increasingly expensive copper line networks.

While encouraging copper retirement, the FCC is keeping consumer protections in place, including requiring interoperability and guarding against price hikes by ensuring that consumers transitioning to new networks get access to services at similar or lower price points.

“Outdated FCC rules have left Americans sitting in the slow lane for far too long,” FCC Chairman Brendan Carr stated. “Those FCC rules have forced providers to pour resources into maintaining aging and expensive copper line networks instead of investing in the modern, high-speed infrastructure that Americans want and deserve. We are doing something about that today. We are streamlining the process for retiring decades-old copper networks so that providers can transition consumers and their resources to new, high-speed networks on a faster timeline. We do so by clearing some of the regulatory underbrush that needlessly delays the retirement of those copper networks.

“There is much more work ahead for the FCC, and our goal through additional actions is to ultimately free up billions of dollars for new networks that otherwise would have been diverted into costly and outdated copper lines. This initial set of actions gets things moving in the right direction and creates the right incentives for providers to invest and build new networks in communities across the country. As we take these actions, we are also ensuring that consumers remain protected during the transition.”

The Wireline Competition Bureau takes the following actions through its orders:

- Adopts a clarification that will enable providers to use streamlined procedures more often when they apply to discontinue copper lines.
- Adopts a waiver that allows providers to retire copper networks, not only in cases where replacement voice services are available on a stand-alone basis, but in cases where those services are available on a bundled basis. The FCC’s pro-consumer pricing protections will remain in place.
- Adopts an order that waives unnecessary requirements that kicked in whenever a provider “grandfathered” a legacy service—meaning, they stopped offering it to new customers.
- Adopts an order that waives costly and excessive notice requirements in cases where they provide no demonstrable benefit. In fact, over the past two years, the FCC has processed more than 400 network change disclosure filings and not once has the FCC received a comment in opposition.

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