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California's top utility regulator says it would take as many as 20,000 new workers to inspect every utility pole and wire in the state. California Public Utilities Commission President Michael Picker says that won't work, but regulators may turn to drones to monitor the equipment. Picker spoke about wildfire safety efforts and Pacific Gas & Electric Corp.'s bankruptcy to lawmakers at a hearing in Sacramento on Wednesday.

The PUC regulates investor-owned utilities. It is considering replacing PG&E's board, breaking up its gas and electric divisions or other big changes in a review that will likely take a year. Picker says the PUC has learned fines alone haven't been enough for PG&E to change its behavior. Lawmakers questioned whether the PUC is acting fast enough to prevent future wildfire damage. – **Associated Press**

Mississippi's 25 electrical cooperatives can now offer high-speed internet service Wednesday as Gov. Phil Bryant signed a law that immediately gives them that legal authority. Michael Callahan, CEO of Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi, said he was counseling patience as Bryant signed **House Bill 366**, but the first of the power providers could begin offering internet service by the end of this year or early next year. "Just letting people be connected to what's going on is critical to the advancement of this state," said House Speaker Philip Gunn, a Clinton Republican who sponsored the bill.

Callahan said 20 of the state's 25 cooperatives have already performed feasibility studies, and three more are now planning studies. He said many of the nearly 800,000 customers cooperatives serve statewide have indicated interest in buying the service, but said cooperatives have to make sure the service will pay for itself. "We can't get caught up in emotion," Callahan said. "This has to be a business decision."

Callahan said cooperatives were meeting Wednesday to discuss applications for a share of \$600 million in loans and grants the U.S. Department of Agriculture will award this year to expand service. He said cooperatives could partner among themselves or without outside vendors who have expressed interest. Cooperatives aren't required to offer and current customers wouldn't be required to buy service. The law allows cooperatives to invest money, loan money or guarantee loans to affiliates, but says they can't use revenue from electric sales to subsidize broadband. – **Associated Press**

Charter Communications Inc topped quarterly revenue estimates on Thursday, as the cable operator attracted more customers for its internet services, offsetting a drop in video subscribers. The company's shares rose 6.2 percent in trading before the bell. More and more subscribers are deserting pay TV bundles and switching to cheaper streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon.com's Prime video.

That has pushed companies including Charter and Comcast Corp to focus on their broadband businesses and high-speed internet upgrades as a strategy to survive in the rapidly changing media landscape. Charter added 289,000 residential internet customers in the fourth quarter ended Dec. 31. The company reported a loss of 36,000 residential video customers in the quarter, compared with net 2,000 customers it gained last year.

Philadelphia Inquirer
Democratic Senate colleague calls for State Sen. Daylin Leach's expulsion

Politico
Facebook embraces regulation — reluctantly

Bloomberg
Facebook's Shares Surge as Advertisers Ignore Scandals

Zap2it
Cable Top 25 for Week Ending January 27

Net income attributable to shareholders fell to \$296 million, or \$1.29 per share, from \$9.55 billion, or \$34.56 per share, a year earlier, when the company booked a huge tax benefit. Analysts had estimated a profit of \$1.51 per share. Total revenue rose 5.9 percent to \$11.23 billion. Analysts on average had expected revenue of \$11.14 billion, according to IBES data from Refinitiv. — **Reuters**

Nokia Corp. forecast growing, if sporadic, demand for 5G gear this year and next, but said near-term sales are likely to be flat as the Finnish telecom equipment maker struggles to emerge from years of cost cutting and profit warnings. Nokia shares fell 6% Thursday after a dim outlook for the first half of the year overshadowed better than expected full-year sales.

Nokia and European peer Ericsson AB fell behind Chinese competitor Huawei Technologies Co. in **supplying telecom carriers with the gear**—antennas, base stations and other equipment—to build out their mobile networks. Amid a recent backlash by the U.S. and other governments against Huawei over spying fears, analysts and investors have been eager to gauge any bottom-line boost for the European players. The U.S. has said Huawei could be compelled by Beijing to help it spy, an allegation the **company has denied vigorously**. Washington has pushed allies to ban the sale of Huawei gear, with some effect, particularly in Europe. Vodafone Group PLC said last week it would stop buying certain 5G gear from Huawei in Europe amid government uncertainty over the supplier. The Czech Republic's postal service said Wednesday it would **bar Huawei from tenders** for its network build outs.

That has all provided opportunity for Nokia and Ericsson. Shares in the two have sometimes jumped on news of U.S. pressure against Huawei. Any concrete financial boost, however, **hasn't shown up in earnings yet**. Instead, both companies have said they are benefiting generally from demand for new 5G components. Carriers are rolling out the new technology in their networks, promising to eventually replace 4G networks with faster download times and capacity to connect more devices to the internet.

Nokia said Thursday that rollout of the new technology will be staggered. It expects a soft first half of the year, with a particularly weak first quarter, followed by a much more robust second half. Network sales were again driven by North American operators. Nokia said carriers there have been eager to lead the transition to 5G and have been ahead of the pack in terms of investments in the new technology. European sales were flat, while Chinese and Middle Eastern sales fell on the year.

Nokia said it expects sales to kick in during the latter half of 2019 and power ahead in 2020. "Over the longer term, we expect a virtuous cycle of investment, where operators update their networks across multiple domains," said Chief Executive Rajeesh Suri. He added that he expected "a second wave, where industrial customers will invest in private wireless technology including LTE and 5G-ready networks."

On a call with reporters, Mr. Suri said Nokia was involved in over 70 5G related trials around the world. He said it wasn't the right time to comment about Huawei, but was watching developments and keeping a neutral position. Nokia reported net profit of €193 million (\$222 million) compared with a loss of €386 million a year earlier. Reported sales for the quarter were €6.87 billion compared with €6.65 billion a year earlier, and above analysts' expectations of €6.65 billion. The company proposed an increased dividend of €0.20 for 2018, up from €0.19 in 2017. — **Wall Street Journal**

Gov. Tom Wolf's administration is planning to ask lawmakers to approve a multibillion-dollar plan to borrow money for a wide range of projects, from controlling floodwaters to fighting blight. Wolf, a Democrat, is unveiling the plan Thursday in more detail. The administration is proposing to borrow \$4.5 billion and spend it over four years on a plan that ties together projects for both rural areas and downtowns. Approval will be up to the Republican-controlled Legislature. The administration says the money would go to expand high-speed internet access, improve storm water and flood control and clean up brownfields and blight in hopes of luring new businesses. It also aims to help extend natural gas pipelines to businesses and pay for transportation improvements, including for public transit projects. — **Associated Press**