



American Cable Association president and CEO **Matt Polka** (l.) accepts the 2018 BCAP President's Award from Broadband Cable Association of Pennsylvania president **Dan Tunnell** at the Cable Academy Conference at Kalahari Poconos Resort.

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The Federal Communications Commission said in a notice Thursday that landmark 2015 U.S. open-internet rules will cease on June 11. The FCC in December repealed the Obama-era "net neutrality" rules, allowing internet providers to block or slow websites as long as they disclose the practice. The FCC said the new rules will take effect 30 days from Friday. An FCC spokeswoman confirmed the new rules will take effect on June 11.

A group of states and others have sued to try to block the new rules from taking effect. The revised rules were a win for internet service providers like AT&T Inc. and Comcast Corp. but are opposed by internet firms like Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc. The U.S. Senate is set to vote as early as next week on whether to reject the FCC repeal of the net neutrality rules.

Proponents currently have the backing of 47 Democrats and two independents who caucus with Democrats, as well as Republican Senator Susan Collins. With the prolonged absence of Republican Senator John McCain due to illness, proponents believe they will win on a 50-49 vote. Senator Ed Markey said it was "likely" the vote will take place in the middle of next week. On Wednesday, senators officially filed a petition to force a net neutrality vote and 10 hours of floor debate under the Congressional Review Act.

The FCC voted 3-2 to reverse Obama-era rules barring service providers from blocking, slowing access to or charging more for certain online content. Once they take effect, the new FCC rules would give internet service providers sweeping powers to change how consumers access the internet but include new transparency requirements that require them to disclose any changes to consumers.

If the Senate approves the measure, it would not likely pass the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. If the legislation were to pass the House, it is expected that President Donald Trump would

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veto it. In February, a coalition of 22 state attorneys general refiled legal challenges intended to block the Trump administration's repeal of net neutrality.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has often said he is confident the agency's order will be upheld. Democrats have said they believe the issue would be key in November's midterm congressional elections, especially among younger internet-savvy voters. Republicans have said the FCC repeal would eliminate heavy-handed government regulations, encourage investment and return the internet to pre-2015 rules. – **Reuters**

Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc. said Wednesday that it will raise about \$1.5 billion from the sale of the nearly two dozen television stations to gain regulators' approval for its purchase of Tribune Media Co.

Sinclair announced [the sale of the stations](#) last month to parties including Standard Media Group LLC, Meredith Corp., Howard Stirk and Cunningham Broadcasting Corp., and an unnamed buyer. 21st Century Fox Inc. said Wednesday it is buying seven of those stations for about \$910 million. The Tribune Media purchase, which has faced regulatory scrutiny, was originally valued at \$3.9 billion when it was announced in May 2017.

Wednesday, Sinclair said the combined company will reach 62% of U.S. TV households if the deal closes, well below the 72% of U.S. TV households that was originally expected. Sinclair, which said it expects to close later this year, would have 215 stations in 102 markets in its fold, bulking up its holdings as one of the nation's biggest broadcasters. "After a very robust divestiture process, with strong interest from many parties, we have achieved healthy multiples on the stations being divested," Sinclair Chief Executive Chris Ripley said in prepared remarks.

21st Century Fox's purchase of stations, which include markets such as Denver, San Diego and Seattle, come as the Walt Disney Co. [is working to buy its entertainment assets](#). In that deal Fox would retain broadcast, sports and news assets, including the Fox TV network and Fox News. (21st Century Fox and The Wall Street Journal's parent, News Corp, share common ownership.) Wednesday, Sinclair, its licensees and Fox have also agreed to a multiyear renewal of 34 Fox affiliates relationships, including affiliates in Columbus, Indianapolis and San Antonio. Sinclair also picked up an option to buy two Fox stations, one in Chicago for \$15 million and one in Austin, Texas, for \$160 million.

Sinclair also reported results for its first quarter, saying that key financial metrics came in ahead of its guidance. Total revenue increased 6.1% from a year earlier to \$665.4 million, ahead of the \$658.4 million expected by analysts polled by FactSet. Profit in the quarter fell to \$43.1 million, or 42 cents a share, from \$57.2 million, or 61 cents a share, a year before. Sinclair also expects political advertising revenue to increase in the current quarter as the election season ramps up. It expects about \$18 million to \$19 million in political revenue in the second quarter, up from \$7 million in the first quarter. Sinclair shares rose 4% in morning trading. 21st Century Fox is slated to report its own quarterly earnings after the market closes Wednesday. – **Wall Street Journal**



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