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Gov. Tom Wolf has nominated [Andrew Place](#) to serve as commissioner on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. Place is currently the corporate director for energy and environmental policy at EQT Corporation and focuses on the economic and environmental implication of unconventional natural gas development. Place is replacing Commissioner Jim Cawley on the commission.

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"Andrew Place brings the knowledge and expertise to help advance my vision for the PUC, and I am pleased to nominate him to serve as commissioner," Wolf said in a prepared release. "We must ensure there is a balance between consumers and utilities. We also have to develop Pennsylvania's abundance of energy resources to make sure we have the infrastructure to support the natural gas and other energy industries."

Prior to joining EQT in 2011, Place served in Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection for 18 months. He served as special assistant for energy and climate change and then acting deputy secretary of the Office

of Energy and Technology Deployment. Before working at the DEP, Place was a research fellow at Carnegie Mellon University's Department of Engineering and Public Policy with a primary focus on Carbon Capture and Sequestration among other technical, economic, and policy issues related to energy and the environment. Place holds a B.S. in economics from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.S. in public policy and management from the H. John Heinz III College at Carnegie Mellon. He also owns and operates a 210-acre farm in Greene County where he resides. — pennlive.com

Investor Carl Icahn said he expects Apple Inc. to introduce an ultra-high-definition



Today is Primary Election Day in Pennsylvania. Polls in the state are open until 8:00 p.m.

television in 2016. But after nearly a decade of research, Apple quietly shelved plans to make such a set more than a year ago, according to people familiar with the matter.

Apple had searched for breakthrough features to justify building an Apple-branded television set, those people said. In addition to an ultra-high-definition display, Apple considered adding sensor-equipped cameras so viewers could make video calls through the set, they said. Ultimately, though, Apple executives didn't consider any of those features compelling enough to enter the highly competitive television market, led by Samsung Electronics Co. Apple typically likes to enter a new product area with innovative technology and easier-to-use software.

In an open letter Monday to Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook, Mr. Icahn said he believes Apple will enter two new markets—an electric car in 2020 and a television next year. Citing “many years of rumors,” Mr. Icahn said he expects Apple to start selling 55-inch and 65-inch ultra-high-definition sets next year, generating revenue of \$15 billion in fiscal year 2016 on sales of 10 million units. “We view television’s role in the living room as a strategically compelling bolt-on to the Apple ecosystem,” Mr. Icahn wrote. He said Apple shares are worth \$240 each, 84% above their \$130.19 price in 4 p.m. trading Monday on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

Mr. Icahn declined to comment. In his letter, he said that if Mr. Cook chose not to pursue some of the new categories, he’ll be “the first to admit that you are knowledgeable in these areas.” Apple began considering making TVs in the middle of the last decade, as iTunes branched into video. In 2007, it introduced Apple TV, a set-top-box to stream video to TVs.

Former Apple CEO Steve Jobs revealed the TV project to biographer Walter Isaacson. His book, published soon after Mr. Jobs’s death in 2011, quoted Mr. Jobs as saying he wanted to create an “integrated television set that is easy to use” and that he had “finally cracked” the user interface for a TV. In May 2013, Mr. Cook said Apple had a “grand vision” for the television. Since then, he has reiterated that TV is an area of interest for the company.

Apple is now focused on creating an online TV service and redesigning the Apple TV box, the people familiar with the matter said. It hopes to feature the new offerings at its developers’ conference next month, the people said. Apple is in talks with programmers to create a bundle of TV channels delivered over the Internet to its devices, according to people familiar with the matter. It has told media companies that it hopes to unveil the service in June, and begin programming in the fall, they said. Whether Apple makes that announcement may depend on the progress of those talks. Apple TV was the exclusive digital launch partner for HBO Now, the streaming service for Time Warner Inc.’s premium cable channel that launched last month.

Apple is also expected to unveil a slimmer version of its Apple TV box with a redesigned remote control and revamped software, according to people familiar with the matter. Apple hasn’t updated Apple TV since 2012. Apple didn’t officially kill the project to make televisions, according to people familiar with the matter. The team was disbanded with members sent off to work with different product areas, they said. Making a television is a tough sell. It’s a notoriously cutthroat industry that digests and commoditizes new technologies quickly, starting a margin-killing race to lower prices.

In an effort to distinguish itself, Apple investigated various display technologies. In the mid-2000s, it created a prototype display that was transparent, like a pane of glass, when turned off but used lasers to display an image when turned on, according to a person familiar with the matter. That technology never made it past the research phase because it used an enormous amount of power and the image

quality was poor. Apple patented the technology in 2010.

Apple had a small team working on the TV set in the years before it put the project on ice, said people familiar with the matter. It considered building TVs with screens offering four times the resolution of high-definition displays. The price of such 4K displays—named because they have about 4,000 horizontal pixels in an image—have come down in the past few years, but those screens were still prohibitively expensive at the time.

Apple also looked at features that could expand the television's function in the living room. Using cameras above the screen, Apple experimented with a video-calling feature—described as FaceTime for the television—that sensed who was talking and directed the camera to the speaker. In the end, the people familiar with the matter said the feature didn't seem compelling enough to drive an entry into a new product area. — *Wall Street Journal*

Charter Communications announced Monday that it was going ahead with its \$10.4 billion deal for Bright House Networks, signaling the start of a new push to consolidate the country's cable operators. The transaction was previously agreed to in conjunction with Comcast's proposed takeover of Time Warner Cable, but was contingent on that deal's completion. After that deal fell apart, Charter and Bright House had an exclusive 30-day negotiating period, which was set to expire this week.

The two companies said on Monday that they were committed to completing the transaction on the same economic and governance terms as the original agreement, which was announced in March. The companies said they had extended a "good faith negotiating period" for an additional 30 days, which keeps Charter's options open for longer. The deal is not yet signed, and either party could walk away. "We look forward to completing the transaction as planned, and our teams are working together to make that happen," said Tom Rutledge, chief executive of Charter.

The deal would unite Charter, the country's No. 4 cable operator, with Bright House, the sixth largest. The combined company would become the country's No. 3 operator, behind Comcast and Time Warner Cable. But perhaps more significant is the additional firepower it would give Charter to pursue a new round of deal activity. Acquiring Bright House would provide Charter with a stronger balance sheet, allowing it to borrow more money to make a cash-rich offer for Time Warner Cable, analysts said.

Backed by John C. Malone's Liberty Broadband, Charter has pushed for industry consolidation for nearly two years. Executives at Charter and Bright House have said that a larger national player would be a strong force in creating new technologies and in negotiations with television groups over rising programming costs.

Charter set its sights on Time Warner Cable and started its hostile pursuit in 2013. Time Warner Cable fended off the bid, and Comcast ultimately stepped in last year with its \$45 billion offer. Now, Charter and Mr. Malone have another chance at their original target. This time around, executives have signaled that the deal is not likely to take the same hostile route. "Any transaction that goes forward, if one were to occur, will be a friendly transaction," Gregory B. Maffei, chief executive of Liberty Broadband, said during a recent conference call.

Mr. Maffei said Liberty could raise capital to help Charter with its bid for Time Warner Cable and has been approached by many potential partners that would be interested in helping to finance the transaction. He added that he hoped regulators would look more favorably on Charter's efforts to consolidate, given Charter's

relatively small size compared with Comcast. Some analysts had speculated that Time Warner Cable would have been able to block a deal with Charter by making an acquisition of its own. One likely target had been Bright House, a possibility obviated by the announcement on Monday. "If anything, this helps improve the chances of Charter and Time Warner Cable combining," said Amy Yong, a media industry analyst, who put the likelihood that Charter and Time Warner Cable would join together as slightly better than 80 percent. – *New York Times*



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