

# TEGNA blacks out DISH customers in 39 Markets

- *TEGNA blacks out popular football games and holiday shows; turns back on public interest obligations using viewers as negotiating leverage*
- *TEGNA rejects DISH offer to extend contract, including retroactive 'true-up' for new rates, which would keep local channels up while negotiations continue*
- *DISH offers qualified affected customers free digital over-the-air (OTA) antenna and installation*
- *Over the past 5 years, broadcast fees more than double while ratings see double digit decline*

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Dec. 1, 2018 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- This evening, TEGNA Inc. blacked out DISH customers' access to its 49 local channels in 39 markets across 34 states and the District of Columbia. TEGNA is blocking consumers in an effort to gain negotiating leverage as it demands nearly double the monthly rates for its local channels, even as broadcast TV ratings decline.

"TEGNA refused DISH's offer to extend the contract, instead choosing to black out its stations on the eve of college football's conference championships and during the homestretch for the NFL season. It couldn't be more obvious that TEGNA is using its own viewers as leverage as it demands nearly double the monthly rates, even as ratings on broadcast TV are down double digits," said Andy LeCuyer, DISH senior vice president of Programming.

According to Nielsen, primetime TV ratings are down on the big four broadcasters (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) 12 percent over the past five years. During that same period, broadcast retransmission fees more than doubled, from \$4.9 billion to \$10.2 billion, according to SNL Kagan, a leading source on the media industry.

TEGNA rejected DISH's offer of a short-term contract extension that would include a retroactive true-up when new rates were agreed upon and would preserve the ability of DISH customers to access the stations while negotiations continued. The true-up would ensure that TEGNA was made whole at the new rates for the period of any contract extension.

"The channels could come back today if TEGNA would allow it, and we can restore the channels immediately if they give us the green light," added LeCuyer. "On behalf of customers, we ask TEGNA to stop punishing its own viewers so we can focus on reaching a fair deal."

Affected DISH customers can view NFL games using an over-the-air antenna or stream local and most primetime games for free on mobile phones and tablets as [announced by the NFL](#).

"As an immediate solution, we are encouraging fans to take advantage of streaming NFL games for free on a phone or tablet while we urge TEGNA to return these stations to our customers," said LeCuyer.

## Retransmission Consent

In exchange for using the public airwaves, broadcasters provide their channels for free, accessible with an over-the-air antenna; however, pay-TV companies are required to pay broadcasters to provide those same channels to their customers. If the two parties do not reach an agreement, the pay-TV provider must stop delivering those stations.

More information on this FCC-mandated process is available here:

<https://www.fcc.gov/media/policy/retransmission-consent>

## Free Antenna Installation, Seamless Integration

As DISH works to reach an agreement, the company is offering digital over-the-air (OTA) antennas at no cost so that customers in affected markets can watch these channels for free.

Tens of thousands of eligible DISH customers have integrated OTA antennas into their DISH experience, accessing news, popular network shows and sports from local channels for free. Customers with qualifying equipment, programming, and location can choose to receive local channels free over the air and save \$12 per month on their bill.

"Integrating OTA-delivered local channels can unlock \$144 savings annually for DISH customers," explained LeCuyer. "Customers will see the local channels and show information for the most popular channels in the guide on the Hopper DVR, and can watch and record local channels using their DISH remote without switching inputs on the TV. DISH doesn't save money, but consumers can."

Local station availability over the air is dependent on geographic location and topography. Consequently, some customer locations may not qualify for an antenna installation.

## Price of Local Channels Soars

Each year, the cost to carry local broadcast stations rises far beyond the rate of inflation, leading to blackouts across the country that affect millions of

consumers across all pay-TV companies. In the past decade, the fees TEGNA and other broadcasters charge pay-TV providers to carry local channels has risen 1,700 percent.

"A decade ago, a gallon of gas cost about two dollars. If gas prices had gone up like the cost to watch your local channels, that same gallon of gas today would be about 40 dollars," continued LeCuyer.

[According to SNL Kagan](#), broadcast fees burdening pay-TV consumers are expected to reach an unprecedented \$12.8 billion in 2023. These same rates, for channels available free over the air, were as low as \$215 million in 2006. With this projected 60x increase, the cost to deliver local channels is the fastest growing part of consumers' monthly pay-TV bills.

Along with other pay-TV companies and public interest groups that form the [American Television Alliance](#), DISH has called for the U.S. Congress to revamp the out-of-date laws that favor these high fees and unnecessary blackouts.

DISH customers can visit [DISHPromise.com](#) for more information.

#### **About DISH Network L.L.C.**

Since 1980, DISH has worked on behalf of consumers to deliver innovation and value. Through its subsidiaries, the company provides television entertainment and award-winning technology to millions of customers. DISH Network L.L.C. is a wholly owned subsidiary of DISH Network Corporation (NASDAQ:DISH), a Fortune 250 company. Visit [www.dish.com](http://www.dish.com).

SOURCE DISH Network Corporation

For further information: [news@dish.com](mailto:news@dish.com), 720-514-5351

---