

Citizen groups seek second concession in '77 compliance issue

They ask access to financial reports of cable operators to discuss whether they can afford expansion present rule mandates

The National Black Media Coalition and the Philadelphia Community Coalition won three weeks more time in which to file comments at the FCC on whether or not to postpone the March 31, 1977, deadline for major-market cable systems to comply with FCC rebuild standards.

Following the commission's reinstatement of the April 7 due date for comments, NBMC filed a Freedom of Information Act request to see the 1973 and 1974 annual financial reports of all major market cable systems.

NBMC said that until now all claims of financial difficulties have been premised on figures that the cable industry itself has computed. Citizen groups cannot accept or rebut the cable industry's representations if they are denied access to the financial reports.

The original April 7 comments deadline had been moved up to March 17, according to the commission, because of 11 multiple system operators, who argued that an expedited comment schedule was necessary in view of the present economic burdens on the cable industry and the nearness of the compliance date. Furthermore, the commission said, it hoped to emphasize the "very narrow" nature of the inquiry, which is limited to the amount of capital required for cable systems to comply with rebuild standards and the availability of such capital in the market place.

NBMC and PCCC answered that any dollar consideration must be balanced against public-interest concerns. The earlier deadline, they added, had foreclosed this possibility.

Seeking strength in numbers

The National Cable Television Association and three multiple system operators have filed a motion to consolidate their respective cases, now pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, which seek review of the FCC's new fee schedule (BROADCASTING, Feb. 10).

The request for consolidation comes after the NCTA had opposed the FCC's move to have the cable association's petition for review lumped together with noncable petitioners also seeking review of the fee schedule. NCTA objected to such a consolidation on the ground that combining its petition, which seeks only review of CATV annual fees, with others that dealt with the entire fee schedule would lend to "confusion, delay and inequity."

Subsequently, the court accepted petitions for review of the schedule filed by Lamb Communications, Liberty Com-

munications and Summit Communications, which the FCC did not seek to consolidate with the others. Since both cases represent an appeal limited to the legality of the CATV annual fee alone, NCTA and the Lamb group submitted, that in the interest of "appropriate expedition and economy" the two cases be consolidated.

Cable Briefs

No merger. Comsat Corp., Bala Cynwyd, Pa., and Vikoa Inc., New York, have called off possible merger (BROADCASTING, Aug. 5, 1974). Sale of certain Vikoa CATV systems to Comcast is still being discussed.

Pending approval. Cable TV of Acadiana Inc., subsidiary of Wometco Communications, Miami, received franchise to build and operate CATV system for Eunice, La. System is to be operational by yearend, contingent on FCC approval.

Incident in Ithaca. Home Box Office, Madison Square Garden Center Inc. and Ceracche Television Corp., operator of cable-TV system in Ithaca, N.Y., jointly announced civil suit against two men who they say have been installing remote-control devices that allow Ithaca TV-set owners to pull in pay channel without compensating Ceracche. Theft-of-service suit seeks restraining injunction and damages against Gary Loomis and Richard Henry of Veraxon Industries, Ithaca, N.Y. Complainants said no legal action would be taken against Veraxon's customers.

N.Y. commission adds refinements to rules for financial reports

The New York State Commission on Cable Television has amended the financial reporting requirements for cable systems which it adopted last fall. At that time, the commission sought a uniform base for reporting by cable systems that would be more easily understood by state officials and public interest groups.

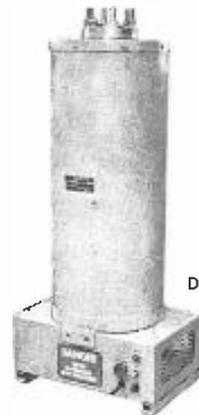
The amendments are the product of an agreement between the commission and the New York State Cable Television Association, whose members complained that some of the original requirements were unnecessary or burdensome.

Cable companies, under the amended rules, may make their reports on a fiscal-year rather than a calendar-year base, thus eliminating need for conversion by some operators.

Another change is the elimination of certain fixed asset subaccounts (for example: amplifiers, head-end, tower equipment and trunk-distribution facilities), which many small- and medium-market cable operators claimed were more burdensome than beneficial. Nevertheless, the amended rules specify that a plant and equipment ledger must be maintained in enough detail to derive a depreciation formula and to satisfy the "informational needs" of government agencies.

A third adjustment deals with the

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DPTC-20KFM	20KW	3/8"	1.2:1
DPTC-30KFM	30KW	3/8"	1.2:1
DPTC-40KFM	40KW	3/8"	1.2:1
DPTC-50KFM	50KW	6/8"	1.2:1
DPTC-75KFM	75KW	6/8"	1.25:1

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VSWR: 1.2:1

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