

In Brief: FCC drops 'must-carry' agenda item

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Proposed rules covering "must-carry" multicasts were pulled from this week's Federal Communications Commission agenda.

The move was seen as an indication that support for the rule requiring cable companies to carry multiple broadcast channels from a single source lacked support on the commission.

The Hill reported Tuesday that the multi-carry rule would require cable companies carry secondary television signals from local broadcasters on their digital services rather than just the primary signal.

Television broadcasts convert entirely to digital in 2009, leaving some broadcasters concerned they will be squeezed out of future cable lineups.

"A multicasting rule would provide an explosion of free local program choices for consumers, including public interest programming," the National Association of Broadcasters said in a statement Monday. "If consumers are to enjoy the full benefits of digital television, cable operators must not be permitted to strip out the full DTV signal for anti-competitive purposes."

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