

FCC closes loophole in cable program access rules

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(AP) -- Federal regulators have closed a wrinkle that has allowed cable TV operators to withhold sporting events and other popular programming that they own from satellite companies and other rivals.

The [Federal Communications Commission](#) voted 4-to-1 on Wednesday to eliminate the so-called "terrestrial loophole" in a 1992 federal cable law.

That loophole has enabled companies such as [Comcast](#) Corp., Cox Communications Inc. and Cablevision Systems Corp. to circumvent access requirements in the law by distributing programming over land-based rather than satellite connections.

Cable companies have been able to deny programming to competitors such as DirecTV Inc., Echostar Corp.'s Dish Network, AT&T Inc.'s U-Verse video service and Verizon Communications Inc.'s FiOS video service.

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