

# BCE resubmits Astral bid to broadcast regulator

November 19 2012, by Rob Gillies

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(AP)—Canada's largest telecommunications company, BCE Inc., resubmitted a bid to the country's broadcast regulator to buy Astral Media Inc. for \$3.38 billion, the companies said Monday.

The Canadian Radio-television [Telecommunications Commission](#) blocked a deal last month, saying it would have resulted in an unprecedented level of consolidation in the country's [media landscape](#).

Astral is Canada's largest pay and specialty TV broadcaster. It owns 25 TV stations, including HBO Canada. It also owns 84 radio stations in 50 Canadian markets and is the third-largest outdoor advertising company.

BCE, also known as Bell, wants to deliver more content to televisions, tablets and mobile devices.

BCE said Monday they've found ways to address the CRTC's concerns over the level of ownership concentration in some markets but said details on the amended proposal will be made available by the CRTC when it launches its public consultation period.

"We heard Canadians and the CRTC loud and clear—they want assurance that Astral joining with Bell Media will directly benefit consumers and creators. We're ready to deliver more choice for listeners and viewers, more opportunity for [content creators](#), and more competition for the broadcasting industry," George Cope, Bell's president and CEO, said in a statement.

Many had expected the regulator would approve the deal with conditions, but Jean-Pierre Blais, who took over as chairman of the CRTC five months ago, said the combined company would have controlled 107 radio stations, two national English language television stations and 49 pay and specialty television channels.

Blais dismissed the notion that they could have set conditions on the deal. He said last month that BCE is already Canada's largest [Internet service provider](#), the second largest wireless service provider and third largest television distributor in Canada.

Most of BCE's competitors said the deal would have placed significant market power in the hands of one vertically integrated company.

BCE had argued it needed to do the deal to compete with international rivals like video subscription service Netflix, and they pledged tangible benefits by adding \$240 million in funding for programs.

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