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Atlantic Broadband has inked a deal to acquire all of FiberLight's South Florida fiber network, more than doubling the cable operator's fiber footprint in the region. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The purchase includes about 350 route miles of fiber, expanding Atlantic Broadband's network to cover 7,000 route miles and 25,000 on-net buildings reaching from Maine to South Florida. Atlantic Broadband, the ninth largest U.S. cable operator, said the acquisition enables it to significantly speed up its expansion efforts for fiber-delivered enterprise and carrier services.

The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. ~ Vince Lombardi

TEAMWORK



As part of the deal Atlantic Broadband has purchased dark fiber from FiberLight that will allow the company to start offering advanced enterprise



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communication solutions across its entire network footprint right away. "With interconnections to every major data center and nearly 200 on-net buildings throughout South Florida, acquiring FiberLight's high quality and high capacity fiber network will cement our position as a leading provider of business communications services in South Florida," David Isenberg, Atlantic Broadband president and CRO, said

[settlement becomes public](#)

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in a [statement](#). “We look forward to playing an even greater role in supporting and enabling the innovation and economic growth that has characterized this region.”

The deal is expected to close within six months, the company said. “We are pleased to forge a new partnership with Atlantic Broadband to enable the expansion of their business in the greater Miami market, while at the same time, allowing FiberLight the opportunity to re-invest in our Texas and Northern Virginia markets which are experiencing significant growth,” Don MacNeil, FiberLight CEO, noted.

FiberLight owns more than 1.3 million miles of fiber networks in more than 44 key growth areas in U.S. cities and towns within Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and Washington D.C. Earlier this month, Atlantic Broadband closed on its [\\$1.4 billion purchase of MetroCast Cable systems](#). Previously owned by Harron Communications, MetroCast systems pass about 236,000 homes and businesses in Main, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. – **CED**

Hampton Township (Allegheny Co.) Council voted to oppose House Bill 1620 that would allow wireless providers the ability to install wireless structures without having to adhere to local regulations. The Wireless Infrastructure Deployment bill “removes the municipalities ability to collect funds pertaining to wireless cell phone service incorporated into the cable franchise fees, but also allows wireless infrastructure towers on private residential properties within the utility right-of-way without the property owners' consent and without township approval,” according to the township statement.

For example, a company like Verizon would be able to place a cell tower anywhere they want, said Christopher Lochner, township municipal manager. Municipalities and communities usually have zoning laws or government regulations that manage this type of activity. “You could lose your land-use control. You could have a zoning ordinance that they can supersede,” said Lochner.

Martin Orban, township land use administrator, said the bill would allow wireless corporations to “put it anywhere without any authority from a municipality.” Aside from the ground, Orban said a wireless structure could be placed on a telephone pole or perhaps a home. “They don't need a property owner's permission either,” said Lochner.

Vince Tucceri, legal counsel for the township, suggested perhaps these wireless corporations are behind the bill because they don't want to have to adhere to the many different zoning laws and regulations at each municipality they enter. House Bill 1620 on the Pennsylvania House of Representatives website, called the Wireless Small Cell Broadband Act, was presented by Reps. Nick Miccarelli and Frank Farry in June 2017 explaining there's a growing demand for wireless communication services, including high-speed broadband in rural Pennsylvania. “However, because siting decisions are made on a municipal level in Pennsylvania, the wireless industry is faced with varying and inconsistent fees and siting procedures that hamper its ability to deploy this critical wireless infrastructure,” per a memorandum by Farry and Miccarelli.

The representatives said their legislature provides that local government would still have some authority over zoning and land use, but certain fees, permitting requirements and general policies would be limited, among other things. The Hampton council members unanimously agreed to sign the resolution noting their opposition at their Jan. 24 regular meeting. Lochner said the signed resolution will be sent to the Pennsylvania League of Municipalities with other communities, which will be directed to the appropriate Pennsylvania legislation. – **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**

It's fair to say things got a little snappish at the FCC Wednesday.

The Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (BDAC) -- which is charged with laying out recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for driving broadband expansion in the US -- found itself facing a fundamental divide. Some members of the committee want rules that give communications service providers greater access to poles and other structures in the public right-of-way by guaranteeing local permit approvals and capping fees.

Others believe local officials have the right to determine rules of access based on the public interest. Specifically, they think that local governments have the right to negotiate with service providers to ensure that broadband buildouts reach all communities, thereby helping to close the digital divide. The fault lines in the debate are clear. Industry folks want unfettered access, arguing that next-generation broadband services require it. Cities, and in some cases states, want service providers to recognize that there are other factors to consider, i.e. that it takes resources for local governments to oversee permitting, and that unregulated deployments without regard for the needs of an entire community are

not in the interest of the citizens who collectively own the public assets in question. (See [Broadband Fee Fight Gets Messy at the FCC.](#))

According to San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, who is part of the working group in the BDAC focused on creating a municipal code for broadband deployment, his group was recently moving toward consensus in its discussions after many long hours of debate. However, before the group was able to present its ideas to the broader committee at the FCC this week, AT&T Inc. filed a separate proposal that Liccardo says was essentially a "rewrite of what had been very much worked through." And he added that, "It was dispiriting for many of us who had been working hard to see suddenly things really swept aside for the industry proposal."

AT&T's argument is that if communities don't make it easier and cheaper for telecom companies to deploy their equipment, broadband deployments will stall out and consumers will suffer. The company says in an [FCC filing](#) that attachment rates should be capped at \$50, and that higher rates would lead to "lost investment and/or higher services costs [that] would harm consumers and materially inhibit or limit a service provider's ability to provide wireless services at the quantity and quality customers now demand."

Chris Nurse, assistant vice president for external affairs at AT&T, also noted at this week's BDAC meeting that deployments of wireless small cells are an example of how the current pole attachment process isn't working because it's costly and time-consuming. He suggested that the cable industry's rollout of WiFi hotspots has been far more effective because there's no incremental cost or approval required for deploying each new wireless access point.

Ironically, however, David Don, vice president for regulatory policy at Comcast Corp., pushed back on Nurse's assertion, pointing out that cable companies devote significant time and money to forming franchise agreements in order to enable those WiFi hotspot deployments. "No one understands what you guys are trying to do with negotiating with thousands of cities better than the cable industry. We've been doing it for 50 years," said Don.

He added that, "We can see when you guys decided to enter the public rights-of-way for the first time after 20 years of building out your networks on public property, and this densification process you're undergoing, why you would want to seek a more streamlined approach than the cable franchising model. But to suggest that we're getting some kind of a free ride or it's a highly efficient system? There's one piece, these WiFi hotspots, that you may want to point out, but this is part of a bigger negotiation which takes years with these communities."

Here's why the whole debate is so important. Although the BDAC group is only charged with making recommendations to the FCC, those recommendations will inevitably be picked up by both lobbyists and lawmakers in the future. In fact, many involved in the BDAC process have pointed out that often times legislators use the *exact language* included in an expert group's recommendations to craft new laws. In other words, whatever goes in the final BDAC report could very well end up in a future bill presented to Congress.

Speaking of Congress, there's a [draft bipartisan bill](#) led by Senators John Thune (R-S.D.) and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) already in circulation that proposes to create a federal standard for permitting timelines for the deployment of communications equipment needed to support new 5G wireless broadband services. The bill hasn't been formally introduced in the Senate, but its proponents may be (among other reasons) waiting to see the recommendations of the BDAC first.

Pole attachments don't get nearly the hype of an issue like net neutrality. But the impact to broadband rollouts of what gets decided about the pole attachment process will be substantial over the next many years. And if the fights among the BDAC members are any indication, the debate is only going to get more hostile from here. – **Light Reading**

