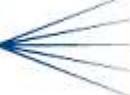


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The Obama administration on Monday unveiled new labels for broadband and mobile Internet service, aimed at helping the nation's web users make price and service comparisons.



The labels from the U.S. Federal Communications Commission **are similar to federally required nutrition labels** on nearly all U.S. foods or information on credit card billing statements and will include disclosures of all fees and add-on charges and service speed and reliability. The new labels are

recommended but not legally required, though firms that use them will not face government investigations into transparency rules.

The FCC said there are 97.8 million American households and business subscribers to fixed broadband service and 223 million U.S. mobile phones with internet access, according to the most recent data. More than 85 percent of all Americans use the Internet and typically spend \$60 or \$70 a month on service, the FCC said, and the new labels could be a big factor in which service consumers choose to buy.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray unveiled the new labels at a press conference in Washington - and were supported by a committee of industry and consumer groups. Wheeler said the key

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to robust competition was better information for consumers. "This is industry and advocates coming together unanimously," Wheeler said. "Customers deserve to know the price they will actually pay for a service and to be fully aware of other components such as data limits and performance factors before they sign up for service."

Cordray said "consumers deserve to know before they owe, with clear, upfront information about the prices, risks and terms of the deal." Scott Bergmann, vice president of regulatory affairs at wireless trade association CTIA, said carriers "already provide disclosure and transparency as part of the consumer code for wireless service. The competitive nature of the wireless broadband market does more for consumers than regulation can hope to achieve."

The label is part of the 2015 FCC net neutrality order that requires new disclosures by Internet providers. A federal appeals court heard a separate challenge to the net neutrality order in December, but hasn't yet ruled. "In today's competitive marketplace, cable Internet providers are committed to providing consumers with accessible and relevant information about broadband services," the National Cable & Telecommunications Association said. Referring to the new format's resemblance to the nutritional labels, the NCTA added, "We appreciate this contribution by the [FCC] to offer consumers that same information in a format they are familiar with." – *New York Times, Wall Street Journal*

Former Comcast Corp. CFO Michael Angelakis, now running a \$4-billion Comcast-backed venture fund, made his first big bet on Monday with a \$250 million investment into battered online-deals site Groupon.

Angelakis will join the Groupon board as part of the transaction, Groupon said. The deal is Comcast's latest investment into digital media after previously announced stakes in BuzzFeed and Vox. Comcast also is rumored to be interested in acquiring Yahoo and recently began selling its cable and Internet services on online retail giant Amazon.

Angelakis, Comcast's former chief financial officer and vice chairman, launched the Comcast-backed Atairos earlier this year, with offices in New York and Bryn Mawr. Comcast has agreed to fund the Atairos with \$4 billion.

Atairos will be purchasing \$250 million in senior notes that are due in 2022 and can be converted into Groupon shares at \$5.40 a share. Groupon shares were trading at \$4.35 a share in the early afternoon on Monday, up 11 percent. "Groupon is an established leader in connecting customers with local business," Comcast Cable CEO Neil Smit said in a statement. "The potential in combing Groupon's local expertise with Comcast's vast subscriber and advertiser network is something we look forward to closely exploring together." – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Idaho's Attorney General Lawrence Wasden says his office is ready to take legal action in the event the Department of Administration refuses to try to recover money paid out under the illegal \$60 million broadband contract.

In March, the Idaho Supreme Court agreed that a statewide contract for broadband in public schools was void. The justices said the law required the state to try to recover the money already paid out under the voided contract, but they stopped short of officially ordering state officials to seek repayment. Instead, the justices ruled that if the appropriate state officer does not seek repayment, the state's chief legal officer could step forward to do the job. "The Supreme Court was pretty clear about the duty certain public officers have to claw back that money, and it's pretty evident on the face of the statute," Wasden said on Friday.

A spokeswoman for Department of Administration Director Bob Geddes says the agency has until October to make a final decision, but she added that a decision would likely not

be made soon. Wasden's announcement comes almost a week after the Idaho Legislature approved allocating \$8 million for a possible settlement with the former vendors of the Idaho Education Network.

House Speaker Scott Bedke and Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill have been negotiating with Education Networks of America and Qwest to come up with a fair dollar amount to cover the work the companies did under the contract but were not yet paid for because the state halted payments once a lower court voided the contract. "This is about saving the taxpayer money. We have exposure here and we can settle over there. That's a good thing for Idaho taxpayers," Bedke said.

Bedke and Hill said the settlement will be cheaper than the \$11 million the state is currently facing in tort claims from the vendors. "The Legislature can appropriate this money into this fund. There's nothing constitutionally unsound about that. The question becomes then in the expenditure of that money and it must be done in the accordance of the law," Wasden said. – ***Associated Press***