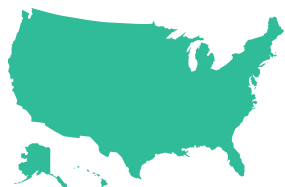


CONNECT THE FUTURE



Too many unserved households, small businesses, and schools are still awaiting connectivity due to the excessive costs and needless delays that internet service providers (ISPs) face when attaching to poles.

THE SOLUTION

Federal action at the FCC and Congress is needed to:

- Guarantee a more equitable division of costs between pole owners and attachers when poles must be replaced
- Ensure pole attachers have timely access to poles by standardizing permitting timelines and accelerating the resolution of pole attachment disputes

IdeaTek (KS)

Source: [INCOMPAS Comments to FCC](#)

IdeaTek was forced to pay the entire cost of pole attachments, delaying buildout.

- “INCOMPAS’ member IdeaTek, which operates in rural Kansas...has been allocated **100 percent of the replacement costs** on applications that require make-ready and pole replacement, with no consideration given to the enrichment and benefit this confers to the utility or the current value or condition of the pole.”

Mediacom (MN)

Source: [ACA Comments to FCC](#)

A pole owner pushed significant capital and business costs onto Mediacom.

- “...an investor-owned utility in Minnesota **charged Mediacom to fix violations on poles to which Mediacom had been attached for 20 years caused by the utility** moving its equipment during pre-make-ready inspections for a new attacher.”

SECTV (PA, NJ)

Source: [ACA Connects Comments to FCC](#)

SECTV faced unpredictable and unreasonable pole replacement costs during a rural buildout.

- “In 2021, SECTV reports that **a utility planned to charge it more than \$10,000 to replace a more-than-fifty-year-old pole**, almost 30% of the total make-ready costs for a project to reach eleven residents.”

NLBC (IN)

Source: [ACA Connects Comments to FCC](#)

Two pole owners sought to recover the entire cost of pole replacements from NLBC.

- “[w]hen utilities’ poles must be replaced to accommodate NLBC attachment requests, it is our experience that the two IOUs in our service area give no consideration in assessing the charges regarding the age of the pole or whether it is scheduled to be replaced; **these two IOUs always seem to recover – or seek to recover – the entire cost of the replacement from us as a new attacher.** Thus, the pole owners similarly do not take into account the benefit that the new pole may create for the utility (or other attachers).”

Lumos Network (WV)

Source: [NCTA Petition to FCC](#)

Pole owners forced existing attachers to pay pole costs that were already recovered from the new attacher.

- “[Lumos Network] regularly encountered situations to absorb the entire cost of survey and make-ready work merely because it happened to be the first attacher requesting access to a certain route or to certain pole lines...**pole owners typically expect the new attacher to pay all of the costs of make-ready and will then often seek additional remuneration from existing attachers for costs they already recouped.**”

Armstrong Cable (PA)

Source: [ACA Ex Parte Filing](#)

Pole attachers are often forced to pay for preexisting safety or regulatory compliance violations on poles.

- “...utilities often fail to provide any explanation for the significant increases in project costs on the final bill and do not provide the information necessary to challenge the reasonableness of the make-ready charges. Mr. Shawn Beqaj (Armstrong) provided examples where **a utility charged a new attacher for the correction of preexisting safety violations caused by others or for overdue improvements designed to bring poles into compliance with utility regulations.**”

MetroNet (IN)

Source: [ACA Comments to FCC](#)

MetroNet’s deployment was delayed for more than a year because of a personnel issue from the pole owner.

- “MetroNet...has been **waiting more than a year for approval of applications** for 160 pole attachments because the one employee responsible for reviewing applications was out on extended medical leave.”



CONNECT THE FUTURE

California Fiber ISP (CA)

Source: [SHLB Comments to FCC](#)

Permitting and cost disputes with pole owners often result in significant broadband deployment delays.

- “A California fiber ISP whose mission is to bring fiber broadband networks to rural and remote areas experienced **serious time delays** and a **large increase in project expenses** when an investor-owned utility revealed that **hundreds of its poles in some very rural and remote areas did not have test and treat survey inspections in a decade or more**. This caused substantial delays in bringing broadband service to unserved communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Crown Castle (IL)

Source: [NCTA Petition to FCC](#)

A pole owner forced Crown Castle to pay to replace or reinforce previously “red tagged” poles.

- “**ComEd refused to permit Crown Castle to attach to poles that had been ‘red tagged’ by ComEd until Crown Castle first pays to replace or reinforce those red tagged poles**, even though the conditions that caused the red tag status existed prior to and are unrelated to Crown Castle’s proposed attachment.”

Uniti (PA)

Source: [INCOMPAS Comments to FCC](#)

A pole owner in PA created its own arbitrary pole rules and standards.

- “In the case of Uniti, **one utility in Pennsylvania developed its own pole attachment safety standards and refused to share or disclose with the company what those exact standards were**. In response, Uniti requested a copy of the utility’s standards in hopes of developing a better understanding of the applicable specifications so that they could correctly design their build according to these requirements. To date, the utility has refused.”



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