

## § 76.1302

## 47 CFR Ch. I (10–1–16 Edition)

### § 76.1302 Carriage agreement proceedings.

(a) *Complaints.* Any video programming vendor or multichannel video programming distributor aggrieved by conduct that it believes constitute a violation of the regulations set forth in this subpart may commence an adjudicatory proceeding at the Commission to obtain enforcement of the rules through the filing of a complaint. The complaint shall be filed and responded to in accordance with the procedures specified in § 76.7 of this part with the following additions or changes:

(b) *Prefiling notice required.* Any aggrieved video programming vendor or multichannel video programming distributor intending to file a complaint under this section must first notify the potential defendant multichannel video programming distributor that it intends to file a complaint with the Commission based on actions alleged to violate one or more of the provisions contained in § 76.1301 of this part. The notice must be sufficiently detailed so that its recipient(s) can determine the specific nature of the potential complaint. The potential complainant must allow a minimum of ten (10) days for the potential defendant(s) to respond before filing a complaint with the Commission.

(c) *Contents of complaint.* In addition to the requirements of § 76.7, a carriage agreement complaint shall contain:

(1) Whether the complainant is a multichannel video programming distributor or video programming vendor, and, in the case of a multichannel video programming distributor, identify the type of multichannel video programming distributor, the address and telephone number of the complainant, what type of multichannel video programming distributor the defendant is, and the address and telephone number of each defendant;

(2) Evidence that supports complainant's belief that the defendant, where necessary, meets the attribution standards for application of the carriage agreement regulations;

(3) The complaint must be accompanied by appropriate evidence demonstrating that the required notification pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section has been made.

(d) *Prima facie case.* In order to establish a *prima facie* case of a violation of § 76.1301, the complaint must contain evidence of the following:

(1) The complainant is a video programming vendor as defined in section 616(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and § 76.1300(e) or a multichannel video programming distributor as defined in section 602(13) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and § 76.1300(d);

(2) The defendant is a multichannel video programming distributor as defined in section 602(13) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and § 76.1300(d); and

(3)(i) *Financial interest.* In a complaint alleging a violation of § 76.1301(a), documentary evidence or testimonial evidence (supported by an affidavit from a representative of the complainant) that supports the claim that the defendant required a financial interest in any program service as a condition for carriage on one or more of such defendant's systems.

(ii) *Exclusive rights.* In a complaint alleging a violation of § 76.1301(b), documentary evidence or testimonial evidence (supported by an affidavit from a representative of the complainant) that supports the claim that the defendant coerced a video programming vendor to provide, or retaliated against such a vendor for failing to provide, exclusive rights against any other multichannel video programming distributor as a condition for carriage on a system.

(iii) *Discrimination.* In a complaint alleging a violation of § 76.1301(c):

(A) Evidence that the conduct alleged has the effect of unreasonably restraining the ability of an unaffiliated video programming vendor to compete fairly; and

(B) (1) Documentary evidence or testimonial evidence (supported by an affidavit from a representative of the complainant) that supports the claim that the defendant discriminated in video programming distribution on the basis of affiliation or non-affiliation of vendors in the selection, terms, or conditions for carriage of video programming provided by such vendors; or

(2) (i) Evidence that the complainant provides video programming that is

similarly situated to video programming provided by a video programming vendor affiliated (as defined in §76.1300(a)) with the defendant multichannel video programming distributor, based on a combination of factors, such as genre, ratings, license fee, target audience, target advertisers, target programming, and other factors; and

(ii) Evidence that the defendant multichannel video programming distributor has treated the video programming provided by the complainant differently than the similarly situated, affiliated video programming described in paragraph (d)(3)(iii)(B)(2)(i) of this section with respect to the selection, terms, or conditions for carriage.

(e) *Answer.* (1) Any multichannel video programming distributor upon which a carriage agreement complaint is served under this section shall answer within sixty (60) days of service of the complaint, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.

(2) The answer shall address the relief requested in the complaint, including legal and documentary support, for such response, and may include an alternative relief proposal without any prejudice to any denials or defenses raised.

(f) *Reply.* Within twenty (20) days after service of an answer, unless otherwise directed by the Commission, the complainant may file and serve a reply which shall be responsive to matters contained in the answer and shall not contain new matters.

(g) *Prima facie determination.* (1) Within sixty (60) calendar days after the complainant's reply to the defendant's answer is filed (or the date on which the reply would be due if none is filed), the Chief, Media Bureau shall release a decision determining whether the complainant has established a *prima facie* case of a violation of §76.1301.

(2) The Chief, Media Bureau may toll the sixty (60)-calendar-day deadline under the following circumstances:

(i) If the complainant and defendant jointly request that the Chief, Media Bureau toll these deadlines in order to pursue settlement discussions or alternative dispute resolution or for any other reason that the complainant and

defendant mutually agree justifies tolling; or

(ii) If complying with the deadline would violate the due process rights of a party or would be inconsistent with fundamental fairness.

(3) A finding that the complainant has established a *prima facie* case of a violation of §76.1301 means that the complainant has provided sufficient evidence in its complaint to allow the case to proceed to a ruling on the merits.

(4) If the Chief, Media Bureau finds that the complainant has not established a *prima facie* case of a violation of §76.1301, the Chief, Media Bureau will dismiss the complaint.

(h) *Time limit on filing of complaints.* Any complaint filed pursuant to this subsection must be filed within one year of the date on which one of the following events occurs:

(1) The multichannel video programming distributor enters into a contract with a video programming distributor that a party alleges to violate one or more of the rules contained in this section; or

(2) The multichannel video programming distributor offers to carry the video programming vendor's programming pursuant to terms that a party alleges to violate one or more of the rules contained in this section, and such offer to carry programming is unrelated to any existing contract between the complainant and the multichannel video programming distributor; or

(3) A party has notified a multichannel video programming distributor that it intends to file a complaint with the Commission based on violations of one or more of the rules contained in this section.

(i) *Deadline for decision on the merits.*

(1)(i) For program carriage complaints that the Chief, Media Bureau decides on the merits based on the complaint, answer, and reply without discovery, the Chief, Media Bureau shall release a decision on the merits within sixty (60) calendar days after the Chief, Media Bureau's *prima facie* determination.

(ii) For program carriage complaints that the Chief, Media Bureau decides on the merits after discovery, the

Chief, Media Bureau shall release a decision on the merits within 150 calendar days after the Chief, Media Bureau's *prima facie* determination.

(iii) The Chief, Media Bureau may toll these deadlines under the following circumstances:

(A) If the complainant and defendant jointly request that the Chief, Media Bureau toll these deadlines in order to pursue settlement discussions or alternative dispute resolution or for any other reason that the complainant and defendant mutually agree justifies tolling; or

(B) If complying with the deadline would violate the due process rights of a party or would be inconsistent with fundamental fairness.

(2) For program carriage complaints that the Chief, Media Bureau refers to an administrative law judge for an initial decision, the deadlines set forth in § 0.341(f) of this chapter apply.

(j) *Remedies for violations*—(1) *Remedies authorized.* Upon completion of such adjudicatory proceeding, the Commission shall order appropriate remedies, including, if necessary, mandatory carriage of a video programming vendor's programming on defendant's video distribution system, or the establishment of prices, terms, and conditions for the carriage of a video programming vendor's programming. Such order shall set forth a timetable for compliance, and shall become effective upon release, unless any order of mandatory carriage would require the defendant multichannel video programming distributor to delete existing programming from its system to accommodate carriage of a video programming vendor's programming. In such instances, if the defendant seeks review of the staff, or administrative law judge decision, the order for carriage of a video programming vendor's programming will not become effective unless and until the decision of the staff or administrative law judge is upheld by the Commission. If the Commission upholds the remedy ordered by the staff or administrative law judge in its entirety, the defendant will be required to carry the video programming vendor's programming for an additional period equal to the time elapsed between the staff or administrative law

judge decision and the Commission's ruling, on the terms and conditions approved by the Commission.

(2) *Additional sanctions.* The remedies provided in paragraph (j)(1) of this section are in addition to and not in lieu of the sanctions available under title V or any other provision of the Communications Act.

(k) *Petitions for temporary standstill.* (1) A program carriage complainant seeking renewal of an existing programming contract may file a petition along with its complaint requesting a temporary standstill of the price, terms, and other conditions of the existing programming contract pending resolution of the complaint. To allow for sufficient time to consider the petition for temporary standstill prior to the expiration of the existing programming contract, the petition for temporary standstill and complaint shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the existing programming contract. In addition to the requirements of § 76.7, the complainant shall have the burden of proof to demonstrate the following in its petition:

(i) The complainant is likely to prevail on the merits of its complaint;

(ii) The complainant will suffer irreparable harm absent a stay;

(iii) Grant of a stay will not substantially harm other interested parties; and

(iv) The public interest favors grant of a stay.

(2) The defendant multichannel video programming distributor upon which a petition for temporary standstill is served shall answer within ten (10) days of service of the petition, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.

(3) If the Commission grants the temporary standstill, the adjudicator deciding the case on the merits (*i.e.*, either the Chief, Media Bureau or an administrative law judge) will provide for remedies that are applied as of the expiration date of the previous programming contract.

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