

§ 76.986 “A la carte” offerings.

(a) Collective offerings of unregulated per-channel or per-program (“a la carte”) video programming shall be regulated as CPSTs pursuant to § 76.922. For purposes of this section, “multiplexed” channels shall be treated as one channel.

(b) A discounted package price offered by a cable system is not unreasonable with respect to any collective offering of channels if the component channels’ collective offering also have been continuously available on the system on a per channel basis since April 1, 1993.

(c) A collective offering of per channel offerings may be treated as New Product Tier if:

(1) The collective offering meets the conditions set forth in § 76.987; or

(2) The operator had reasonable grounds to believe the collective offering involving only a small number of migrated channels complied with the Commission’s requirements as of the date it was first offered.

(d) In reviewing a basic service rate filing, local franchising authorities may make an initial decision addressing whether a collective offering of “a la carte” channels will be treated as a cable programming service tier that is an NPT under § 76.987 or a CPST that is regulated under § 76.922. The franchising authority must make this initial decision within the 30 day period established for review of basic cable rates and equipment costs in § 76.933(a), or within the first 60 days of an extended 120 day period (if the franchise authority has requested an additional 90 days) pursuant to § 76.933(b). The franchising authority shall provide notice of its decision to the cable system and shall provide public notice of its initial decision within seven days pursuant to local procedural rules for public notice. Operators or consumers may make an interlocutory appeal of the initial decision to the Commission within 14 days of the initial decision. Operators shall provide notice to franchise authorities of their decision whether or not to appeal to the Commission within this period. Consumers shall provide notice to franchise authorities of their decision to appeal to the Commission within this period.

(e) A limited initial decision under paragraph (b) of this section shall toll the time periods under § 76.933 within which local authorities must decide local rate cases. The time period shall resume running seven days after the Commission decides the interlocutory appeal, or seven days following the expiration of the period in which an interlocutory appeal pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section may be filed.

(f) A local franchising authority alternatively may decide whether a collective offering of “a la carte” channels will be treated as an NPT as a part of its final decision setting rates for the basic service tier. That decision may then be appealed to the Commission as provided for under § 76.945.

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§ 76.987 New product tiers.

(a) Operators may establish a category of CPSTs, referred to as “new product tiers” (“NPTs”), and offer these tiers to subscribers at prices they elect.

(b) In order to be eligible to offer NPTs, cable operators must meet the following conditions:

(1) Operators offering NPTs are prohibited from making fundamental changes to what they offer on their BSTs and CPSTs offerings on September 30, 1994. Operators may drop channels or move channels between BSTs and/or CPSTs or to an a la carte offering so long as the aggregation of such changes do not constitute a fundamental change in their BST or CPSTs.

(2) Operators may not drop channels that were offered on their BSTs or CPSTs on September 30, 1994 and move them to NPTs unless they wait at least two years from the date the channels were dropped from the BSTs or CPSTs. Time shifted versions, slightly altered versions or renamed versions of channels offered on BSTs and CPSTs on September 30, 1994 shall not be exempt from this restriction.

(3) Operators must market their BSTs and CPSTs so that customers should be reasonably aware that:

(i) Those tiers are being offered to the public;

(ii) The names of the channels available on those tiers; and