The Public ADVOCATES OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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PUBLIC ADVOCATES OFFICE SECURES CRITICAL CONSUMER PROTECTIONS IN CHARTER/COX MERGER

The Public Advocates Office's settlement with Charter Communications is expected to provide up to $1.9 billion in savings through low-cost broadband offerings and promotional pricing protections

SAN FRANCISCO, August 13, 2026 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved the merger between Charter Communications (operating as Spectrum) and Cox Communications and adopted, with minor clarifications, a settlement negotiated by the Public Advocates Office that includes significant broadband pricing and affordability protections for California consumers.

"Broadband is an essential service, and Californians should not pay more simply because they have fewer choices," said Linda Serizawa, Director of the Public Advocates Office. "This settlement delivers real consumer protections. The safeguards we secured will help keep broadband affordable after the merger and expand low-cost options for low-income households."

Under the settlement negotiated by the Public Advocates Office, Charter agreed to:

- **Expand affordable broadband options for low-income Californians for at least five years.** Qualifying households will have access to a standalone 100/20 Mbps plan for $20 per month, along with new California LifeLine options with out-of-pocket costs ranging from $0 to $30 per month.
- **Establish first-in-the-nation protections against excessive broadband pricing disparities** by limiting statewide promotional broadband prices for three years at $30 for 100 Mbps, $50 for 500 Mbps and $70 for gigabit service, with additional protections against significant geographic price differences.
- **Protect existing low-income Cox customers** by allowing them to remain on their current qualifying low-income plans for at least five years after the merger.

More than **400,000 households** in the merged company's California service area are estimated to be eligible for the low-income offerings. Those plans could collectively save eligible households up to **$1.3 billion over five years**. The promotional pricing protections could provide additional savings across approximately **2.6 million locations** where the merged company would be the only gigabit-capable broadband provider.

The Public Advocates Office protested the proposed transaction in September 2025 and subsequently negotiated the settlement with Charter to address concerns about broadband affordability, low-income service offerings and pricing following the merger.

For more information on the Public Advocates Office, please visit www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov.

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