

PRESS RELEASE

AIDCF Calls on MIB to Reject TRAI's Proposal on DTH License Fee Reduction

Urges Government to Uphold Competitive Balance and Spectrum Equity in Broadcasting Sector

The All India Digital Cable Federation (AIDCF) has submitted a formal representation to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) opposing the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) recommendation to reduce and eventually waive the license fee currently levied on Direct-to-Home (DTH) operators.

AIDCF, India's apex body representing Digital Multi-System Operators (MSOs), has expressed serious concerns over the far-reaching consequences of this proposal. If accepted, it would deepen the regulatory imbalance between DTH and digital cable operators and jeopardize the viability of over 880 MSOs and 1.6 lakh Local Cable Operators (LCOs) nationwide. The potential fallout could also impact over 10 lakh livelihoods directly tied to the cable TV distribution sector.

"This move threatens the very foundation of equitable competition in the broadcasting distribution space. Spectrum for DTH is already allocated administratively – without auction or cost – whereas cable operators continue to bear substantial Right of Way (RoW) charges and heavy capital expenditure on underground infrastructure. Any waiver of license fees would not only distort the market but also violate the principle of regulatory neutrality," said an AIDCF spokesperson.

AIDCF has emphasized that the regulatory framework must reflect the full commercial value of the spectrum allocated to DTH operators. Instead of reducing or waiving the fee, the Federation recommends the development of a more balanced mechanism that ensures fair cost recovery from all platform providers, in line with spectrum valuation norms.

Additionally, AIDCF has highlighted the risk of undermining the Government's Digital India goals. Cable TV plays a pivotal role in connecting Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities with affordable digital services and broadband potential. Weakening this ecosystem in favor of one platform could have long-term implications for rural connectivity, digital inclusion, and consumer choice.

AIDCF has urged the Ministry to reject TRAI's recommendation and maintain a level playing field that protects the economic viability of all stakeholders in the broadcasting distribution chain.