

RV Industry Mobilizes for STELAR

Tells Congress they need distant signal license, preferably in perpetuity

JOHN EGGERTON JUL 29, 2019

Associations representing RV manufacturers, dealers, owners and the campgrounds that host RVs are calling on Congress to renew the compulsory satellite license in the STELAR law.

That is because the license gives them access to satellite TV on the road.

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STELAR is the latest name for the law--which dates from 1988--that established the compulsory license that allows satellite operators to import distant network TV station affiliates into local markets--and RVs--where viewers lack access to local station signals for a variety of reasons.

STELAR is scheduled to expire at year's end unless Congress renews it. MVPDs also want the compulsory license renewed since it gives them access to TV station signals without having to negotiate individually for them, while broadcasters want the license to sunset and the marketplace to decide.

In a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee leaders--Judiciary and Commerce share oversight of the issue--the RV Industry Association, RVDA The National RV Dealers Association, ARVC the National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds, the Family Motor Coach Association and Escapees RV Club, point out that they need the distant signals because RV enthusiasts move from one local market to another. (The license covers truckers and sports stadium tailgaters as well).

"Our associations generally would not insert themselves into a fight between large satellite television companies and large broadcasters," the associations said. "However, the loss of access to network signals would have a significant negative impact on the quality of life for many RV families," he said. "We would emphasize that most RVers have cable or satellite subscriptions at their fixed homes, and that they are already paying once for each of the four national networks; in accessing distant network signals, they pay an additional fee to the networks through the Section 119 license. We are simply asking that they continue to be allowed to do so."

They would like the license to be made permanent, rather than renewable every five years, [as would satellite operators](#), but in any case to renew it.

The letter was sent in advance of a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing Tuesday (July 30) on copyright issues.