



BRIEF

California goes tit for tat with FCC, passes state net neutrality bill

By Samantha Ann Schwartz

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Dive Brief:

- California broke away from federal norm for the second time in recent months by passing its own net neutrality bill Thursday. Senate bill 822 was passed with 61 in favor and 18 against.
- The legislation was proposed by Democratic Sen. Scott Wiener and is intended to prevent internet service providers (ISP) from changing how they handle traffic based on the websites visited. The bill prohibits ISPs from purposefully blocking legal content, "engaging in third-party paid prioritization" and intentionally concealing information about network management practices, among other things.
- Republicans on the California Assembly floor said the bill was "going too far" and overstepped its authority on something the federal government should deal with, reports the Los Angeles Times. Other republican critics said the law could inhibit innovation from ISPs.

Dive Insight:

California's net neutrality bill is reflective of the Obama-era regulation that was repealed earlier this year by the Trump administration. The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Restoring Internet Freedom Order went into effect in June and its supporters said the internet could "flourish" again like before the 2015 net neutrality regulation went into place.

The repeal of the rule was fought by Silicon Valley's top players including Amazon, Facebook, Google and Netflix. Critics of the FCC's repeal plan said it did not have the authority to "preempt state laws." The FCC rebuttal said the U.S. shouldn't operate under an "unwieldy patchwork of regulations."


This is not the first time California has broken the mold in terms of tech regulation.


In July, California passed its own version of GDPR, sending the tech community into a frenzy. Big tech, including Microsoft, Google and AT&T, are now lobbying the Trump administration to craft a federal privacy bill, in the hopes of overruling California's version.

But critics of re-implementing a law like net neutrality or beginning a new era of digital privacy share similar concerns. A patchwork of laws is unrealistic, according to Callum Corr, data analytics specialist at ZL Technologies, in an interview with CIO Dive.

The digital age requires more aggressive regulation, but it's a delicate balance between protecting consumers and companies.

Recommended Reading:

 Los Angeles Times
California legislators advance bill to set strongest net neutrality protections in U.S. [↗](#)

 Variety
California State Assembly Passes Nation's Toughest Net Neutrality Law [↗](#)