



WASTE REPORT for August 31, 2015

NOAA: Surfing the Channels While Riding the Waves

Imagine you were going to miss your favorite TV show or a critical sporting event because you had to work. Well, the crew and scientists of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ship Fairweather do not have to worry about such things because the **American taxpayer is spending over \$40,000 to make sure they have premium satellite TV while at sea.**¹

The Fairweather is part of NOAA's Pacific fleet, primarily charged with studying and mapping the ocean floor.² With a maximum duration of about three weeks between refueling, the scientists and crew can undoubtedly get homesick and even bored on the open seas. So, it seems reasonable to provide some level of basic entertainment.

But, there is no basic cable (or satellite) here; **the Fairweather's package has over 300 TV and music channels, including premium sports channels, such as the PAC-12 and Big Ten Networks, NFL, NHL, and MLB Networks, and NBA TV.**³ In fact, only Dish Network's (who won this contract) highest-end package offers such a line up.⁴

Nielson reported last year that **the average American home has 189 channels or about 1/3rd less than are available on the Fairweather.** Interesting enough, Nielson also shows that **households consistently only watch about 17 channels no matter how many are available.**⁵ **But when it is on Uncle Sam's dime... go ahead load it up;** someone onboard might want to watch Rural TV, which is part of the package. And load it up is just what NOAA did, with 44 satellite receivers so that everyone aboard has personal access to this viewing smorgasbord.⁶

By comparison, **members of United States Navy only get three TV (News, Sports, and a variety channel) and three music channels on ship,** all run by Armed Forces Networks.⁷ Why not NOAA style satellite TV on Naval ships? As one source told the FSO subcommittee, "we need that bandwidth to do our jobs."

Stay tuned, Up Next: More Waste

¹ *Satellite TV Service*, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Fedbizopps.gov, Solicitation # NMAN79111401412DLZ Aug. 2014

² http://www.oma.noaa.gov/publications/fa_flier.pdf

³ *Satellite TV Service*, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Fedbizopps.gov, Solicitation # NMAN79111401412DLZ Aug. 2014

⁴ <http://www.dish.com/compare-channels/?vals=AT250>

⁵ *CHANGING CHANNELS: AMERICANS VIEW JUST 17 CHANNELS DESPITE RECORD NUMBER TO CHOOSE FROM*, The Nielson Company, New York, NY; May 2014

⁶ *Satellite TV Service*, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Fedbizopps.gov, Solicitation # NMAN79111401412DLZ, Aug. 2014

⁷ *Fact Sheet: Direct to Sailors (DTS)*, Department of Defense and the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), May, 2012