

[Comcast Applauds Time Warner for Trying Usage Billing; Not Brave Enough to Try Themselves](#)

Comcast says it admires Time Warner Cable for risking subscriber wrath over plans to introduce usage-based billing Time Warner says will be optional for customers in southern Texas. But Comcast admits it is not brave enough to try similar pricing schemes themselves, fearing a customer backlash.

“We have a very high customer satisfaction rating and we don’t really want to rock the boat on [our broadband product],” Comcast chief financial officer Michael Angelakis [told](#) an audience Tuesday at a Wall Street bank-sponsored media and telecom conference in San Francisco. “I give them credit for trying different things, [but] we have real momentum in that business and the goal is to keep it.”

Comcast was a spectator of the consumer and political backlash against Time Warner Cable when it last experimented with usage pricing in April 2009. Within two weeks, Time Warner Cable CEO Glenn Britt shelved the plan under pressure from both customers and lawmakers.

Now Time Warner Cable wants to reintroduce the concept as an option for customers of a new “Internet Essentials” discounted broadband tier that would include a \$5 monthly discount if customers kept usage under 5GB per month.

Some veterans of the 2009 battle suspect Time Warner is trying to slowly slip usage pricing past customers waiting to fight its return by first suggesting it is only an option, but later herding broadband customers into usage based plans by substantially raising the price of flat rate service.



“Looks like a trial run the company could easily expand to all of their Internet customers,” shares *Stop the Cap!* reader Jeff in San Antonio, Tex., one of the cities that will participate in the upcoming usage-based plan. “I have a hard time believing Time Warner is going through all the effort developing usage meters and billing support for usage pricing just to market a handful of customers a \$5 discount.”

Jeff, who helped fend off the cable company’s original Internet Overcharging experiment in 2009, suspects Time Warner’s earlier attempt to market a “flat rate” broadband option at \$150 a month could still be a blueprint for how the company could push customers out of their unlimited plans.

“They can claim they want to keep unlimited Internet, but have remained silent about how much they will charge for it,” Jeff says. “We need something in writing that this company will not gouge customers with the fine print going forward.”

Stop the Cap! [posed several similar questions](#) to Time Warner Cable's Jeff Simmermon, director of digital communications, through the cable company's blog. The company, to date, has offered no response.