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NORTH COUNTRY — The Hearst-Time Warner Cable (TWC) contract dispute was resolved on Thursday. This means that the North Country's subscribers will be able to receive WMUR, the state's largest TV station, through their cable subscription. Many of those posting comments online were frustrated prior to the agreement.

Those commenting after the deal was reached were appreciative, but some remain concerned about the possibility of cable rate hikes.

U.S. Representative Charlie Bass wrote both companies to express his concern. Bass expressed frustration about the dispute's impact on the Second Congressional District.

The letter, dated July 18, was addressed to David Barrett, Hearst Television President and CEO, and Glenn Britt, Chairman and CEO of Time Warner Cable.

Bass did not wish to pass judgment on the merits of either company's claims. His letter concluded, "I urge you to resolve this dispute to the benefit of viewers in New Hampshire as quickly as possible."

Both companies were blaming each other publicly prior to the agreement.

Barrett wrote, "We're disappointed to say that Time Warner Cable is refusing to participate in a negotiating process that has enabled us to conclude more than 150 agreements, without service interruptions, in recent months." He further said that TWC wishes "to hold its subscribers hostage in the hope that it can pressure Congress to intervene."

Andrew Russell, TWC Communications Manager, suggested that Hearst, the parent of WMUR, has an agenda that is harming customers.

He wrote, "we would be more than happy to put WMUR back on, but only Hearst has the power to restore the programming . . . We think it's wrong for Hearst to put our customers in the middle of a business negotiation by blacking out WMUR."

Perhaps pointing to the final settlement, Barrett concluded his statement by saying, "This dispute is ripe for settlement – today." Russell noted that negotiations were ongoing during the impasse. Even with the agreement, the Hearst-TWC relationship seems rocky. Russell said that TWC appreciated customers' patience "through another unnecessary broadcaster blackout."

Another national media dispute was resolved last week. Viacom and DirecTV reached a deal that returned several programs to the satellite network.