

Telecommunications Group Of The Year: Latham

By **Christopher Cole**

Law360 (February 19, 2026, 4:00 PM EST) -- Latham & Watkins LLP shepherded Skydance Media's \$8 billion merger deal with CBS owner Paramount Global, and the Ellison family and RedBird Capital Partners' \$2.4 billion takeover of a controlling stake in Paramount owner National Amusements, earning the firm a spot among the 2025 Law360 Telecommunications Groups of the Year.

The firm not only pushed through that industry game-changer, but has represented Cox Enterprises on all aspects of its ongoing \$34.5 billion plan to merge with Charter Communications, leveraging a legal team spanning M&A, finance, antitrust, communications, tax and other practices to forge one of the year's marquee telecom sector deals.

Latham stood out among firms for its courtroom advocacy, as well, having worked on the cable industry's behalf in the legal debate over net neutrality and digital discrimination rules, among others.

Due in part to Latham's telecom and appellate teams' efforts, the Sixth Circuit overturned a set of Biden-era net neutrality rules in early 2025. The appeals court ruled that the Federal Communications Commission had wrongly interpreted the Communications Act to classify internet service providers as telecom services.

The Eighth Circuit is also taking a close look at the FCC's contested use of a disparate impact standard to gauge bias in broadband deployment, and Latham has represented telecom trade groups in their Sixth Circuit appeal of an FCC data breach reporting rule.

Latham partners Matthew Brill and Elizabeth Park in Washington, D.C., who worked on some of the year's biggest achievements, said the firm's expertise across various specialties makes its lawyers among the most sought-after in the telecom industry.

Brill noted that the firm has the capacity to work on mergers and acquisitions like Cox-Charter from nearly every legal and regulatory angle that a company might need.

"One of the things we're most proud of is that our platform has enabled us to play roles in these transactions across the board, from our premier M&A practice to financing, antitrust, communications and regulatory," Brill told Law360, calling it "pretty rare in the marketplace for firms to be entrusted with so many aspects of the deal."



Brill underscored the work on Skydance and the cable industry mergers as examples. But Latham also represented Lumen Technologies in the \$5.75 billion sale of its Mass Markets fiber-to-the-home business to AT&T, and it advised Hotwire Communications and Blackstone in the sale of Hotwire to funds affiliated with Brookfield Asset Management.

In the Lumen sale, Latham once again handled all aspects of the deal — and has continued to work with state public utility commissions on approvals and with local franchising authorities to move the agreement toward closing. This also involves nailing down commercial agreements to allow AT&T to access Lumen's locations and services.

Brill said it helps to have the cohesion of one legal team collaborating, rather than multiple firms working together, where lawyers don't necessarily know each other.

"We work in a more integrated fashion, and we provide more effective, more efficient representation for the clients [as] a team, so that's one of the strengths we bring to the table," he said.

The kind of complex deals handled by Latham "often have lengthy regulatory approval processes that require deep familiarity with the FCC, its procedures and effective advocacy," Brill said. "So having that integrated part of the team has been really important for us in differentiating us from some of our peers."

Park said that, particularly when it comes to private equity investment, having that interdisciplinary expertise works in Latham's favor, as the firm does a lot of work on deal structuring to ensure companies comply with foreign ownership rules.

"Where private equity is involved, there is usually foreign investment, so we're always dealing with potential national security reviews by Team Telecom," she said, referring to the interagency group that vets U.S. telecom sector investments by foreign companies.

"What we bring to the Latham platform also is a sophisticated understanding of the telecom and media industries and the marketplace, which is constantly evolving, in addition to the regulatory expertise we have," Park added.

Highlighting the firm's ability to take on multiple angles of a transaction at once, Park noted that Latham is "quarterbacking multiple processes" in the Cox-Charter deal, because around 18 public utility commission approvals will be involved. That's on top of more than 100 required local franchise authority agreements.

"So that case, I think, really illustrates the depth and breadth of our practice," she said.

--Editing by Nicole Bleier.