



National Cable & Telecommunications Association

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September 5, 2007

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Markey
Chairman
Telecommunications & the Internet Subcommittee
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
Ranking Member
Telecommunications & the Internet Subcommittee
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

In just 18 months, the United States will embark on a dramatic change in over-the-air broadcast television. A successful transition to an all digital broadcast system will make valuable spectrum available for public safety and increased wireless broadband services, and deliver significant benefits to television viewers.

However, as I testified before your Committee in 2005, the cable industry agrees with your assessment that all of the affected industries – not just the broadcast industry – have an important role to play in educating and assisting all consumers about the transition. Thus, we are proud to have been one of the founding members of the DTV Transition Coalition, working with the broadcast, consumer electronics, and satellite industries as well as many, many other consumer and interested organizations to educate the millions of Americans who will be affected by the digital transition. We are committed to helping the DTV Transition Coalition develop and implement a unified message that can be reinforced across multiple platforms.

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We also agree that consumer education should start sooner rather than later. Thus, I'm pleased to inform you that the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA), on behalf of our member companies which provide hundreds of networks and video service to 65 million U.S. households, will launch this week a substantial and multifaceted consumer education campaign designed to reach all cable customers and millions of non-cable viewers with useful information about the transition.

As many have pointed out, the simplest and most direct route to communicating with television viewers is through television itself. Thus, we are making a substantial commitment to air \$200 million of English and Spanish language advertising on cable and broadcast television stations and networks. That advertising campaign will start this week and will not conclude until February 2009.

The enclosed DVD includes the first four commercials that will begin airing this week and through the fall on both English and Spanish-language broadcast networks and cable systems. These and subsequent spots will be distributed to cable operators and networks for airing in markets nationwide from now through February 2009. And we fully expect to participate in the development and airing of more public service announcements created by the DTV Transition Coalition.

Because, as I mentioned above, it is important for all affected industries to provide a consistent message directed toward general consumer awareness of the transition, we have intentionally tracked both the language and websites of the DTV Transition Coalition. And, because we also have a responsibility to avoid consumer confusion, we have also attempted to provide a more specific message that is directly relevant to cable customers.

The central goal of any DTV education campaign is to reach and educate those Americans who own an analog TV which receives over-the-air signals only. Thus, these commercials attempt to send three simple messages: 1) the digital transition takes place in February, 2009; 2) if you have a TV hooked up to cable, your provider will manage the transition for you; and, 3) if you have an analog TV receiving over-the-air signals only (regardless of whether you have other TVs hooked up to cable), you will have to take some action, about which you can learn more by visiting www.dtvtransition.org or espanol.dtvtransition.org or the toll-free DTV hotline established by the National Telecommunications & Information Administration.

In addition, NCTA has taken the following actions and makes the following commitments on behalf of the cable industry to do our part to ensure a seamless transition for our television viewers:

- NCTA has revamped our website (www.ncta.com) to highlight the digital transition, and today is launching English and Spanish-language websites linked to our homepage that provide consumers with easy-to-understand information, tips and other information about the transition.
- Links on the websites direct users to other government, consumer and industry websites that provide useful consumer information about the transition.
- In 2008, educational messages and reminders about the transition will be sent to all cable customers through monthly statements on invoices and "bill stuffers" in cable bills.
- In 2008, brochures about the transition will be distributed at community and public events.

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- A customer communication “tool kit” will be sent to cable systems nationwide before the end of 2007. It will include:
 - invoice messages to be included on billing statements
 - electronic messages for digital cable boxes
 - on-screen scrolls for local origination channels
 - telephone “on-hold” messaging for customer call centers
 - sample emails to be sent to broadband customers
 - website “banners” for MSO and network websites
- Employee communications materials to educate employees about the DTV transition will be distributed to NCTA member companies.
- Local origination and on-demand programming will be created to provide a brief tutorial on the benefits of the digital transition, and how cable can help customers navigate through it.
- Original research on consumer perceptions of the transition will be conducted, and the results will be shared publicly and with other members of the DTV Transition Coalition.

Finally, I appreciate the many constructive suggestions made by you and Members of the Committee, many of which you will see reflected in our commitments listed above. Our industry intends to continue to play a leading role in the DTV Transition Coalition and we look forward to continuing to work with you, the NTIA, and the FCC to ensure a successful digital transition.

Sincerely,

Kyle McSlarrow

cc: Members, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate
Members, Committee on Energy and Commerce, United States House of Representatives