

With all those complexities and difficulties fully in mind, we nevertheless express great confidence today: confidence that a firm set of rules and principles can be devised to keep the process orderly. Confidence that we can establish a rational process with a beginning, a middle and an end.

The first principle we establish today is that the spectrum we grant for HDTV is for a conversion process; it is not a giveaway. When that process is complete, television licensees will keep a "conversion channel" of 6 MHz and--- let us make no mistake about it--- they will surrender a "reversion channel" to the public domain. The very labels we attach to the process--- "conversion" channel and "reversion" channel--- will serve as a constant reminder that the FCC's grant of spectrum for HDTV is not only additional: it is conditional and transitional. The spectrum we will eventually assign for advanced television developments, in short, has a strong tether attached to it; squatter's rights on the second channel are not what this Commission has in mind.

A second principle is that this conversion process hinges upon a firm cutover date for the end of old-style broadcast TV and the advent of full advanced television. We must adopt a simulcasting approach that moves licensees as quickly as possible to full high-definition transmission. In the item we vote today, we express clear ideas about that cutover date and the simulcasting policy we prefer. Our intention is to make

final decisions on these issues as soon as possible.

We have not come to this moment by magic, or by accident. Fortunately, we have been able to rely upon the talents of some of the best and brightest persons from the television industry on the Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service. We owe a debt of gratitude to every one of those persons for the work they have done and will continue to do. We owe a special debt to a remarkable figure in the world of Communications: Chairman Richard E. Wiley. We owe a great deal, finally, to the leadership of FCC Chairman Al Sikes. His tireless efforts to move advanced television from the drawing board to the laboratory and, eventually, into American homes and the global marketplace deserves to be remembered and honored years from now.

Let me sound, finally, a note of warning, and a summons. Until today, the development of policies for advanced television in the United States has been largely in the hands of elites: the Advisory Committee; trade associations; large broadcast corporations; eminent engineers and lawyers. They have brought HDTV from the wild blue yonder closer to solid earth. Now it is time to move the debate from inside the Beltway to the grass roots. Now it is time for the dialogue to expand: to embrace the greatest possible number of individual television broadcasters. The burden of introducing HDTV, after all, will largely be theirs to bear--- and the public interest in an

orderly transition to advanced television is theirs to protect. If there are television broadcasters at the grass roots who have not yet focused fully on the implications for them of HDTV--- the costs and the difficulties, and also the opportunities--- now is the time for them to get involved.

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