



PUBLIC NOTICE

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
1919 M STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

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Released: November 27, 1996

Technical Standards for Digital Television
MM Docket No. 87-268
The Commission Seeks Comment on Digital TV Standards Agreement

On November 27, 1996, a number of parties representing a diverse range of interests submitted to the Commission the attached agreement on the issue of technical standards for digital television (DTV). The agreement addresses issues raised in the Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in MM Docket No. 87-268. Copies of the agreement are available for public inspection in the docket file in the Commission's Public Reference Room, room 239, 1919 M St., NW., Washington, DC, and on the Commission's internet site, accessed at "www.fcc.gov." Interested parties are invited to submit comments on this proposal by Friday, December 6, 1996. This public notice elicits comment only on matters concerning the elements of the ATSC digital television standard. The Commission does not contemplate any extension of the comment period, and there will be no reply comment filing period. The Commission contemplates action on the issue of technical standards for DTV by the end of 1996.

For additional information, please contact Roger Holberg at (202) 418-2130, Gordon Godfrey at (202) 418-2190, or Saul Shapiro at (202) 418-2600.

Action by the Commission

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Nov 27 '96

November 26, 1996

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

The Honorable Susan Ness
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Room 832
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioner Ness:

As we reported to you yesterday, broadcasters, computer industry representatives ("CICATS"), receiver manufacturers, and the Film Coalition have engaged in lengthy and numerous discussions over the past four weeks concerning the proposed DTV standard. The first three of these groups have reached the following agreement:

- (1) The FCC should adopt no later than December 31, 1996, the voluntary ATSC DTV Standard (A/53), except for the video format constraints described in Table 3, including the aspect ratios ("the FCC standard"). The ATSC DTV Standard, including the Table 3 video format constraints, remains unchanged.
- (2) The FCC's Report and Order adopting the FCC standard should include language clarifying that data broadcasting is a permitted use under the standard. Data broadcasting is defined as the transmission of any type of data other than real-time video and audio programming.
- (3) The parties agree that the FCC standard provides for extensibility of services and that this extensibility feature can be used as long as such services comply with the FCC standard. Video and audio services may be enhanced by providing augmentation data in the manner described in the ATSC "Guide to the Use of the ATSC Digital Television Standard," A/54, Section 8.1.1.3 . See Attachment A hereto.
- (4) Subject to applicable legal restrictions, if any, neither CICATS nor its member companies nor their representatives will directly or indirectly seek to oppose or delay -- before the FCC, by judicial review, legislatively or otherwise -- final adoption of the positions urged by broadcasters and consumer electronics manufacturers in MM Docket No. 87-268 to the extent such

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positions are not inconsistent with this letter. Nor will they support efforts in Congress or elsewhere for auctioning of spectrum allocated or to be allocated for digital television in MM Docket No. 87-268 or other proceedings related to the launch of digital television. After December 31, 1997, CICATS and its member companies may address other spectrum issues, provided that they do not support efforts for the auctioning of spectrum allocated or to be allocated for digital television in MM Docket No. 87-268 or other proceedings related to the launch of digital television. The purpose of this understanding is to further the common goal of expeditious launch of digital television and is not intended to impose restrictions with respect to future regulatory or legislative issues.

In addition, consistent with the target date recognized in your letter to us, the parties will no longer be bound by this agreement if the FCC standard is not adopted by the FCC by December 31, 1996.

The parties agreed beforehand to maintain the confidentiality of the positions taken by them in the discussions, if not agreed to as part of a final resolution of the DTV standard issue. All parties continue to be bound by that agreement.

Respectfully submitted,

BROADCASTERS CAUCUS

CONSUMER
ELECTRONICS
MANUFACTURERS
ASSOCIATION

COMPUTER INDUSTRY
COALITION ON
ADVANCED
TELEVISION SERVICE

By Michael J. Sherlock
Michael J. Sherlock (NBC)
Chairman *jos*

By Gary J. Shapiro
Gary J. Shapiro
President *jos*

By Paul E. Misener
Paul E. Misener
(Intel Corporation) *jos*

cc: Chairman Reed E. Hundt
Commissioner James H. Quello
Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Honorable Larry Irving
Secretary, FCC (for filing in MM Docket No. 87-268)

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ATTACHMENT A

Because there will be possibilities for future services that we cannot anticipate today, it is extremely important that the transport architecture provide open-ended extensibility of services. New elementary bit streams could be handled at the transport layer without hardware modification by assigning new packet IDs ("PIDs") at the transmitter and filtering out these new PIDs in the bit stream at the receiver. Backward compatibility is assured when new bit streams are introduced into the transport system as existing decoders will automatically ignore new PIDs.