



Alliance for Community Media
Foundation of the Alliance
for Community Media

www.allcommunitymedia.org
info@allcommunitymedia.org

Minnesota Headquarters
4248 Park Glen Road
Minneapolis, MN 55416
p: 952 928 4643

Washington DC Office
8817 2nd Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

January 29, 2016

Mr. Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

On behalf of Public, Educational and Government (PEG) Access channels and producers across the United States, we want to thank you for putting forth a proposed Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to remove anti-competitive barriers presented by the set-top box market.

We agree with the Consumer Video Choice Coalition that huge yearly savings for consumers could result from an opening of this market. But beyond this, we believe the Commission has an opportunity to improve consumer access to local program information as a result of the proposal, and to strengthen and revitalize local programming across the United States.

To that end, we also tentatively support the competitive navigation solution (or virtual head end) proposed by the majority of stakeholders in the DSTAC proceeding. This solution may be best way to loosen the stranglehold cable companies hold over not just devices and consumers and but also PEG channel access to viewers.

One of the greatest barriers for PEG Access channels is the lack of program guide information on MVPD systems that carry PEG. It is not for lack of trying. PEG organizations are systematically prevented from providing program guide metadata by cable providers which control access to the navigation systems on their set-top boxes.

This means that local governments are unable to direct citizens to program guides to find vital civic information, and non-profits and educational institutions are put at a disadvantage when they produce programming distributed on these cable systems.

This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that cable consumers pay for these channels through PEG fees or Franchise fees, but are not able to find the local programs and civic information for which they have paid or to record them for later viewing on a DVR.

We look forward to the NPRM so that Americans can discover local program information that matters to their lives. We intend to file comments in the proceeding to help develop a record before the Commission to deal with this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Wassenaar", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Wassenaar

President & CEO

Alliance for Community Media

Cc: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly