



May 16, 2016

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Media Bureau Seeks Comment on Joint Petition for Rulemaking of America's Public Television Stations, the AWARN Alliance, the Consumer Technology Association, and the National Association of Broadcasters Seeking To Authorize Permissive Use of the "Next Generation TV" Broadcast Television Standard, GN Docket No. 16-142; Notice of Ex Parte Communication

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On May 12, 2016, Lonna Thompson of America's Public Television Stations, John Lawson of the AWARN Alliance, Julie Kearney of the Consumer Technology Association, and Alison Neplokh, Bob Weller, Patrick McFadden and the undersigned of the National Association of Broadcasters had separate meetings with Jessica Almond of Chairman Wheeler's office and David Grossman of Commissioner Clyburn's office. During these meetings the parties discussed the attached presentation regarding their recent joint petition asking the Commission to approve broadcasters' voluntary use of the Next Generation TV broadcast standard.¹

Next Generation TV has the potential to dramatically enhance the viewing experience, providing stunning pictures and immersive audio, robust signaling, expanded diverse programming opportunities, enhanced emergency alerting capability and innovative new service offerings. Yet this next step in the evolution of broadcast television will not require additional spectrum or government subsidies. The transition to a new broadcast transmission standard will be entirely voluntary, and the pace of the transition will be driven by market forces, not mandates.

¹ America's Public Television Stations, AWARN Alliance, Consumer Technology Association, National Association of Broadcasters Joint Petition for Rulemaking, GN Docket No. 16-142 (April 13, 2016) (Petition).

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Protecting Viewers

While the Petition asks the FCC to set the stage for the future of television, it also seeks to protect viewers who rely on legacy equipment that may be unable to receive Next Generation TV programming. Broadcasters propose to lead the transition by partnering with other stations to simulcast their signals in both formats. This will ensure that viewers continue to receive free, over-the-air signals in the current standard, while also allowing broadcasters to begin delivering Next Generation TV signals.

This approach means there will be no clock dictating the transition. If Next Generation TV provides a superior viewing experience and exciting consumer benefits, consumers will demand Next Generation-capable television receivers to take advantage of these new opportunities. Thus the market, not mandates, will drive the pace of the transition.

Multichannel Video Programming Distributors

Because broadcasters will maintain over-the-air transmissions using the current DTV standard, MVPDs that receive broadcast content via these over-the-air transmissions will continue to do so. Just as simulcasting will protect viewers, so too will it ensure that MVPDs continue to receive broadcast programming. The approval of a new transmission standard need not impose new burdens on MVPDs, as they will be under no obligation to carry Next Generation signals.

Of course, if Next Generation TV offers a compelling viewing experience that consumers demand, MVPDs may choose to negotiate with broadcasters to carry content featuring higher resolutions, higher frame rates, high dynamic range with wide color gamut, a more immersive audio experience, and other exciting new features. But that decision is left in the MVPDs' hands. Next Generation TV should be a win-win-win for viewers, broadcasters and MVPDs, and a voluntary, market-driven transition will help ensure that MVPDs do not face undue burdens in the transition.

Smaller Broadcasters

While we believe Next Generation TV will prove to be a worthwhile investment in the future of the broadcast industry, this investment will not be cost-free. This is yet another reason why this transition should be voluntary; smaller broadcasters and low power stations should not be required to make this investment if they choose to continue transmitting using the current standard. Because we seek no government subsidies, broadcasters interested in investing in this new transmission standard will have to fund it, much as they did during the DTV transition.

Repacking

Following the successful conclusion of the broadcast spectrum incentive auction, many broadcasters will be assigned new channels in the new, reduced television band. Both broadcasters and successful forward auction bidders have an interest in a post-auction transition that proceeds expeditiously and efficiently. Commission approval of Next Generation TV will not delay this transition or add cost.

Most transmission equipment being manufactured today is capable of being easily upgraded to permit Next Generation TV transmission. While broadcasters may have to make additional investments of their own to take advantage of the full range of Next Generation TV offerings, the equipment repacked broadcasters will need to move to new channel assignments will not be more expensive, nor will it take longer to install, merely because it is Next Generation TV compatible.

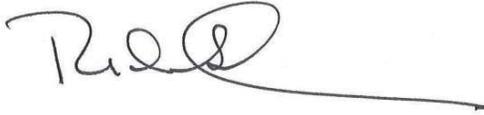
Channel Capacity Following the Auction

A successful incentive auction will result in a television band that is both smaller and populated by a number of stations that have taken advantage of the opportunity to channel share. The post-auction TV landscape will thus have fewer channels without full power operations, and some broadcasters will already be simulcasting with other stations.

While additional spectrum would undoubtedly simplify the transition, it is unlikely to be available. This means that a successful transition to Next Generation TV will require cooperation among those broadcast television stations voluntarily electing to move to the new standard. Broadcasters interested in making the transition have every incentive to work together to ensure that their transition can be successful while they continue to provide the highest-quality signal to their viewers using the current DTV standard.

Next Generation TV offers exciting opportunities for viewers, broadcasters, consumer electronics manufacturers and public safety personnel. Of course, no ambitious project can be expected to proceed without challenges. All the petitioners seek from the Commission is permission to try.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Kaplan", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rick Kaplan
General Counsel and Executive Vice President,
Legal and Regulatory Affairs
National Association of Broadcasters

cc: Jessica Almond
David Grossman



Next Generation Television: Setting the Stage for the Future

May 12, 2016

Background

- Next Generation TV can deliver exciting benefits
 - Enhanced viewing experience
 - New programming opportunities
 - Improved emergency alerts
- Implementation is voluntary and does not require government subsidies or a mandated transition
- Broadcasters seeking permission to innovate

Enhanced Viewing Experience

- Stunning pictures, potentially including:
 - Higher resolutions
 - High dynamic range with wide color gamut
 - Higher frame rates

Higher Resolutions



Wide Color Gamut

Adds more color options, so:



Becomes:



Enhanced Audio Experience

- Augmented, more immersive audio
 - More accurate sound localization
 - Customizable sound mixes

Enhanced RF Experience

- Innovation in RF capabilities allows for
 - Higher data rates with the same coverage area
 - More robust mobile reception
 - Ability to support multiple data rates simultaneously to enable both robust and high quality modes

IP Benefits

- IP-based nature of standard creates new opportunities
 - Enhanced viewing experience with program-related data services
 - Integration with over-the-top video sources
 - Datacasting opportunities

Programming Opportunities

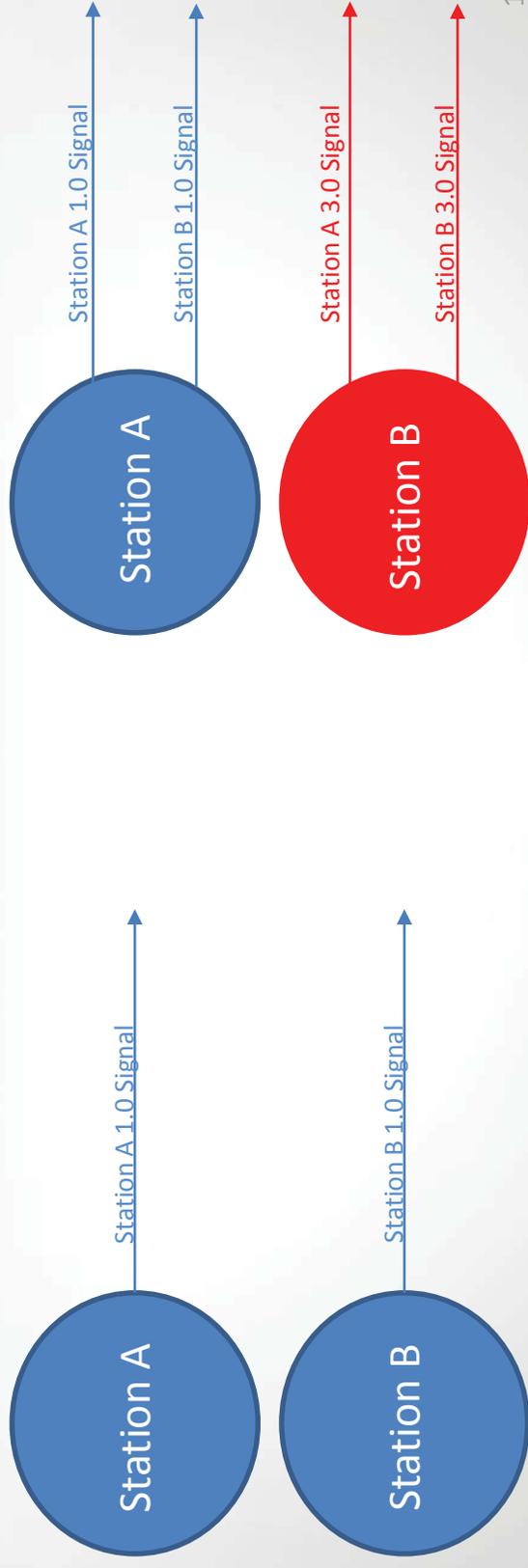
- Next Generation TV can change the game by expanding capacity for television stations
 - New multicasting possibilities
 - Creating new avenues without additional spectrum

Enhanced Emergency Alerts

- New standard may enable life-saving advances
- Robust signaling can be used to alert consumers
- Tailored information for specific geographic areas

Implementation

- Transition is voluntary; achieved through local simulcasting that protects viewers:



Implementation Questions

- Any impact on auction or repacking?
 - None. Installing Next Gen-ready equipment will not require additional repacking resources
 - Change should be both time- and cost-neutral from a repacking perspective
- What are the impacts on viewers?
 - Broadcasters will continue to transmit 1.0 signals and the market will dictate pace of transition as consumers switch to Next Gen equipment
 - 1.0 requirement still in place
- Will there be enough channels?
 - Broadcasters seeking most spectrally efficient transition possible; doing more with less
 - Those choosing to deploy will arrange for simulcasting with other stations

Implementation Questions

- Any impacts on retransmission consent?
 - Deployment of 3.0 does not increase MVPD obligations
 - Broadcasters will continue to deliver 1.0 signals over air or through alternative arrangement (e.g., fiber)
- How does Next Gen affect LPTV stations?
 - Because broadcasters are not requesting additional spectrum, little or no impact on LPTV stations
 - Transition is voluntary and would not preclude LPTV implementation
- Where do smaller broadcasters fit in?
 - Wholly voluntary transition; those unwilling to invest in Next Gen transmission equipment need not do so