



December 10, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Presentation, MM Docket No. 00-39, CS Docket 98-120

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 13, 2002, Marilyn Mohrman-Gillis, Aaron Heffron and Andrew Cotlar from the Association of Public Television Stations and Jerry Butler from the Public Broadcasting Service met with Rick Chessen, William Johnson, Mary Beth Murphy, Eloise Gore, Thomas Horan and Barbara Kreisman from the Media Bureau, FCC to discuss the progress that public television stations have made in the conversion to digital operation. We discussed the status of public television stations' transition to digital. We also discussed the need for funding support for digital conversion provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and by the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program at the Department of Commerce and the timing of stations' receipt of CPB and PTFP digital grants. In addition, we discussed the financial and technical challenges that public television stations face in converting to digital and noted that the FCC has expressed a policy to grant public television stations special relief measures to assist them in converting to digital operation. Lastly, we observed that cable carriage of a broadcaster's entire, free over-the-air broadcast signal is essential to the development of robust multicast services that serve multiple needs in local communities.

Sincerely,

/s/ Andrew D. Cotlar
Andrew D. Cotlar
Senior Staff Attorney



TRANSITION STATUS AND SERVICE PLANS

By The Numbers

PTV digital stations	84 (24%)
% of U.S. households with potential access to digital PTV (Based on DMA population)	58%
# of commercial DTV stations	490 (36%)
# of television markets with DTV signals broadcast by commercial and PTV stations	158 (out of 210)
% of US households with potential access to a digital signal from commercial and/or PTV stations	92%

Funding

- The federal government has committed approximately \$140 million to the digital conversion (CPB and PTFP).
- Approximately \$476 million in state monies have gone to aid in the digital conversion.
- Well over \$260 million in private monies have been raised for the digital transition.

Station Planning Status

- Many stations began digital planning in 1997. DTV service plans are still based on a multicast strategy and added value services for schools and governmental institutions.
- Currently there are approximately 88 HD titles (165 hours) that are available to local public television stations for broadcast. There are over 260 digital programs that are either in HD or digital SD widescreen. 26 local licensees (about 15% of all licensees) have been involved in the production of these HD programs.
- Over 95% of PTV licensees have committed to an educational multicast channel.
- Over 85 licensees have specifically included datacasting in their future digital plans (e.g. K12 educational material, distance learning, weather reports, public safety, and health information).