

March 19, 2004

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Ex Parte Notification**  
MB Docket No. 03-15

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, March 18, 2004, Jack Goodman, Lynn Claudy and Valerie Schulte of NAB and David Donovan and Victor Tawil of MSTV met with Steve Broeckaert, Rick Chessen, Susan Crawford, Gordon Godfrey, Tom Horan, Danielle Jafari, Barbara Kreisman, Keith Larson, Mary Beth Murphy, Nai Tam and John Wong of the Media Bureau and Bruce Franca and Alan Stillwell of OET to discuss replication and maximization protection deadlines for DTV broadcasters, which were raised in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the above-referenced proceeding.

Our comments followed the discussion of these issues in MSTV and NAB's Comments and Reply Comments in this proceeding. Consistent with those comments, we advocated in the meeting that DTV replication and maximization deadlines should coincide with the end of the DTV transition and the repacking of DTV channels into the core DTV spectrum. We maintained that so doing would be prudent policymaking as it would avoid wasted investment in building full facilities on channels that will be abandoned when broadcasters move from out-of-core DTV channels to new in-core channels or move their DTV operations back to their original NTSC channels or to new second channels and at the same time would preserve the benefits of the DTV maximization policy accorded smaller stations. We pointed out that the top four network owned and affiliated stations in the top thirty markets are generally already at full facilities, as are many other stations in various markets. We mentioned as well that our comments supported the Commission's proposal to adopt an intermediate signal coverage requirement beyond the current obligation that DTV signals cover the station's community of license and that studies have shown that broadcasters are now serving the vast majority of their populations with their digital signals.

Sincerely yours,



Valerie Schulte

cc: Rick Chessen