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02-2301

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19 December 2004

Mr. Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th. St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEB 10 2005

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Reference: Foot dragging and denial of consumer choice  
by the Motion Picture Association of America on HDTV.

Dear Chairman Powell:

Once again the Motion Picture Association of America is demanding that the Broadcasters, and the Cable and Satellite Companies cripple the transmission of their shows in HDTV unless they can maintain total control of its usage. The MPAA demand that the distributors of programming provide a 'constrained' image which does not fully utilize the HDTV standard is protect the rights of the MPAA members is nonsense. This is nothing but an attempt to deny choice to consumers and is clearly an end-run around the Beta-Max decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Your rejection of a crippled transmission will enhance the quality of life for Americans. The MPAA members make Billions each year and many of them have ownership interests in companies which were granted the public airways to serve the public. Their threats belittle the Public Trust they were granted to serve.

Any restrictions of choice will result in the landfills of America being filled with obsolete but recently purchased DVD and video equipment. The problems imagined here simply do not exist and any attempt to "Correct" them will cause more compatibility problems with existing home HDTV systems.

Please ignore the same nay-sayers who state that fair use (time shifting, etc..) of high definition broadcast will cause economic problems. This is just crocodile tears from the irresponsible MPAA Executives and Owners and a rerun from the BetaMax days when the poorest performers went out of business and the early adapters of technology made billions in profits. The MPAA and its Owners have refused address the changes in technology and to take any responsibility for the crisis gripping their industry and will not address the fundamental cost and productivity problems which are the cause of their problems. The actions of the MPAA already have resulted in the denial of the delivery of a DVD which plays in full HDTV mode. The technology to deliver the HDTV video on DVD has been available for 4 years. Please ask the MPAA why they are delaying this technology.

It is time for the FCC to insist that the Broadcasters, Cable and Satellite companies broadcast their shows in full resolution HDTV and promote the HDTV Broadcasts. The only group which is promoting the HDTV standard are the HDTV set manufacturers and, in the end, they will make the least money from the new technology!

I look forward to hearing from you as you consider this important issue and having the responsible Broadcasters and Cable and Satellite Distributors meet their obligations.

Sincerely,



William M. Bird  
WMB:wp

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