

November 2, 2006

The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: NCTA Request for a Limited-Time Waiver of the Set-Top Box Integration Ban (CSR-7056-Z; CS Docket No. 97-80)

Dear Commissioner Adelstein:

Recent filings about the so-called “integration ban” have explained cable operator concerns about the requirement that they stop providing set-top boxes that integrate security/descrambling functionality into the box. As programmers, we also have strong views about this rule because we believe its implementation will adversely affect our ability to provide new and innovative content and services to cable customers.

The ban could chill innovation. It is our understanding that the reengineering of set-top boxes required by the ban will force cable operators to divert hundreds of millions of dollars to CableCARD implementation and deployment. Those resources could otherwise be spent on developing and deploying new services to consumers. Content distribution is exploding in so many ways, and to divert cable operator time, money and resources during this exciting but highly competitive time will not benefit consumers.

The ban will divert operator resources from spending that spurs innovative programming. Any additional costs imposed on cable operators to deploy set-top boxes as a result of the integration ban are likely to reduce the money they have available to spend on programming, and, in turn, will adversely impact programmers’ ability to build and grow existing and new networks.

The ban will result in fewer consumers having access to digital programming. We understand that the ban will increase the price of cable set-top boxes. As a result, fewer consumers are likely to buy digital cable services.

Finally, and perhaps most important, it is our understanding that a new technology being developed by the cable industry – downloadable security technology – promises to make this debate moot by enabling cable operators to download the system security software to any cable set-top box or digital television purchased at retail. With this solution on the horizon, it seems unwise to impose a more costly, less efficient, and much less consumer-friendly burden on cable operators and their customers.

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For these reasons, we support the request filed by NCTA seeking waiver of the integration ban until downloadable security is deployed or until December 31, 2009, whichever is earlier.

Sincerely,



Decker Anstrom
President & Chief Operating Officer
Landmark Communications, Inc.



Matthew Blank
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Showtime Networks, Inc.



George Bodenheimer
Co-Chairman, Disney Media Networks
President, ESPN, Inc. and ABC Sports



John Hendricks
Founder & Chairman
Discovery Communications, Inc.



Philip Kent
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.



Geraldine Laybourne
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
Oxygen Media, Inc.



Debra Lee
President & Chief Executive Officer
BET Holdings, Inc.



Judy McGrath
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
MTV Networks

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Abbe Raven
President & Chief Executive Officer
A&E Television Networks



Johnathan Rodgers
President & Chief Executive Officer
TV One



David Zaslav
President
NBC Universal Cable

cc: Marlene H. Dortch (for inclusion in CS Docket 97-80)
Rudy Brioché, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Adelstein