

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

)	
In the Matter of)	
)	MB Docket No. 07-170
Petition for Declaratory Ruling)	
Regarding V-Me Media, Inc.)	
And Its Eligibility to Be Carried)	
As a DBS Public Interest)	
Noncommercial Programmer)	

COMMENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS

The Association of Public Television Stations (“APTS”)¹ hereby submits these comments regarding the Petition for Declaratory Ruling filed by the Hispanic Information and Telecommunication Network, Inc. (“HITN”) on May 18, 2007. HITN has asked the Commission to find that V-Me Media, Inc. (“V-Me”) fails to satisfy the eligibility requirements of an educational programming supplier for the purposes of carriage by DBS providers in fulfillment of their public interest obligations under 47 C.F.R. § 25.701.

APTS supports carriage of the V-Me service on DBS “set-aside” channels. V-Me is provided to DBS carriers by a *bona fide* noncommercial television licensee, the Educational Broadcast Corporation (“EBC”), which also broadcasts the service over the air on WNET-DT. WNET, as a “noncommercial educational broadcast station,”

¹ APTS is a non-profit organization whose membership comprises the licensees of nearly all of the nation’s CPB-qualified noncommercial educational television stations. The APTS mission is to support the continued growth and development of a strong and financially sound noncommercial television service for the American public.

is qualified under 47 U.S.C. § 335 and the Commission's rules to provide programming on a set-aside channel. WNET's editorial control of V-Me ensures that the service remains true to its noncommercial mission. Moreover, until DBS providers begin to carry the multicast offerings of public television stations on a local-into-local basis, their carriage of V-Me represents a way for millions of Americans to receive some of Public Television's best multicast programming.

V-Me is distributed by an ever-growing number of public television stations – in many of the nation's largest markets – on their digital multicast channels, which is a testament to the noncommercial nature of the service and its value to local communities. The provision of V-Me to DBS systems by WNET, one of the country's premier public television stations, for carriage on public-interest “set-aside” channels gives millions of additional viewers access to V-Me's unique educational offerings.

The Commission is well aware of the fragile economic health of public television stations. Though Congress has long recognized the value of noncommercial educational and informational programming to the American public, traditional sources of federal funding are constantly vulnerable. The lack of certainty with regard to long-term funding makes it imperative for public television stations to secure through alternative sources the capital they need to develop the high-quality programming that the public expects and deserves. Public/private partnerships such as EBC's relationship with V-Me are an extremely effective way

to fund the creation and distribution of top-quality educational and informational programming in a noncommercial environment.²

V-Me is an excellent example of the benefits that can result from public/private partnerships. Public Television endeavors to meet the educational needs of the public generally, and of preschoolers in particular. Research demonstrates that children whose vocabulary in one language is enhanced during their preschool years will have a much better chance of succeeding in English learning later in life. Prior to V-Me, however, no service comparable to Public Television's Ready to Learn offerings existed for Spanish-dominant households. V-Me has filled this gap and also provides cultural, educational, public affairs and entertainment programming to all members of Spanish-dominant households, which have historically been underserved. Continued carriage of V-Me on DBS "set-aside" channels will serve the public interest by promoting the widest-possible distribution of high-quality noncommercial educational and informational programming to an audience that needs, and desires, it immensely.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
Lonna M. Thompson

² Much of the most important and highest-quality public television programming is provided through public/private partnerships. For example, *Bill Moyers Journal* is produced by Moyers' production company, Public Affairs Television, Inc., and presented by WNET; *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* is produced by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions and presented by WETA; and award-winning children's program *Cyberchase* is produced by WNET in association with Title Entertainment Inc.

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