



National Cable & Telecommunications Association
25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW – Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 222-2300
www.ncta.com

Daniel L. Brenner
Senior Vice President
Law & Regulatory Policy

(202) 222-2445
(202) 222-2448 Fax

April 10, 2008

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: DTV Consumer Education Initiative; MB Docket No. 07-148

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc. (“NCTA”), we hereby submit the attached report on the cable industry’s consumer education efforts in conjunction with the broadcast industry’s transition to digital television (“DTV”) on February 17, 2009.

This report is submitted pursuant to the Commission’s Report and Order, released March 3, 2008, in the above-captioned proceeding instructing DTV.gov Transition Partners to report their consumer education efforts on a quarterly basis as a condition of continuing partner status.

Sincerely,

/s/ **Daniel L. Brenner**

Daniel L. Brenner

cc: Cathy Seidel, Chief, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Pam Slipakoff, Chief of Staff, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

**FIRST REPORT TO THE COMMISSION ON
THE NATIONAL CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION'S
DTV CONSUMER EDUCATION EFFORTS**

April 10, 2008

The National Cable & Telecommunications Association ('NCTA') hereby submits its first report to the Commission on the cable industry's efforts to educate American consumers about the nation's transition from analog to digital broadcasting on February 9, 2009.

NCTA is the principal trade association representing the cable television industry in the United States. Its members include cable operators serving more than 90% of the nation's cable television subscribers, as well as more than 200 cable programming networks and services. NCTA's members also include suppliers of equipment and services to the cable industry. The cable industry is also the nation's largest broadband provider of high speed Internet access over its two-way fiber optic interactive network.

INTRODUCTION

As a leader in the national transition to the digital age, the cable industry today provides its customers with a broad array of digital programming offerings and advanced information services independently of the broadcasters' conversion to digital. Digital cable customers began purchasing digital programming tiers over ten years ago and since that time, video-on-demand programming, digital video recording, and enhanced electronic program guides, among other interactive services, have been introduced. All of cable's digital services can be viewed by consumers with digital set-top boxes that convert digital signals to analog. And for customers with high definition (HDTV) sets, the wide selection of programming genres available in HD format continues its dramatic growth, from 23 cable networks in 2005 to 74 cable networks today.

While cable operators already provide digital programming to cable households and will continue to ensure service to analog television sets after the transition, the industry committed early on to use its resources to educate all American consumers about the broadcasters' DTV transition through public outreach and marketing efforts. Thus, in September 2007, NCTA launched a substantial and multi-faceted consumer education campaign designed to reach all cable customers and millions of non-cable viewers with information about the broadcasters' transition to digital television.

With an industry-wide commitment of \$200 million, the cable industry initially focused on raising public awareness and understanding of the DTV transition through English and Spanish language television commercials that began airing in September 2007. The campaign also includes a variety of other activities, including DTV "what you need to know" guides and related consumer materials and resources; brochures, websites, local programming, system-originated messaging and other communications with the public. NCTA also has been a leader in inter-industry consumer education efforts and has promoted appropriate messaging and consumer outreach among cable-specific organizations.

As summarized below, this multi-faceted consumer outreach program has aimed to help facilitate a smooth transition for cable customers who receive broadcast signals over cable, as well as informing many non-cable customers about the transition.

Cable Industry Consumer Education Initiative

In September 2007, the cable industry was the first to announce an industry-wide public service and education initiative when NCTA launched *Get Ready for Digital TV*, an 18-month multimedia consumer education initiative designed to inform cable customers and other consumers about how to manage the nation's transition to digital TV. The initiative includes the following key components:¹

Public Service Advertising: NCTA's members, both cable operators and programmers, committed to provide \$200 million in commercial advertising time through February 2009 to air public service advertising about the transition. To date, NCTA has distributed seven 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) to its member cable operators and programming networks along with media plans for their use. Two 15-second PSAs are also available to programming networks. In order to reach a wider audience, several of these spots, which were made in consultation with other members of the DTV Transition Coalition, are available in both English and Spanish language versions. NCTA also has encouraged its member companies to create their own PSAs appropriate for their individual audiences and customer demographics, and several multiple system operators have done so.

NCTA surveys its member companies monthly to request reporting data on the number of times that PSAs run and the commensurate commercial value of that time. From the period of September 2007 through January 2008, the most recent data available, NCTA member companies report having aired PSAs about the digital TV transition in commercial airtime valued at more than \$25 million.

¹ See NCTA News Release at Attachment A.

Internet Content: The cable industry also created web content in both English and Spanish targeted at cable consumers. The two new websites, www.GetReadyForDigitalTV.com and www.preparateparatvdigital.com, were developed by NCTA and launched in September 2007. These websites explain in clear, concise language the reasons for the transition and its benefits, and provide consumers with useful information to help them prepare for the transition should they need to take action. They also include an extensive list of sources of additional information including links to the NTIA and FCC websites. Since their launch, the websites have received more than 28,000 unique visitors who have viewed more than 72,500 pages.

In addition, NCTA has refurbished its own website, www.ncta.com, to become a primary portal to a vast array of consumer education information about the transition. The NCTA site has been reconfigured to prominently feature links to websites from the FCC, NTIA, the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, and the DTV Transition Coalition. Direct links to the NCTA microsites identified above further provide users easy access to additional informational websites from the National Association of Broadcasters, the Consumer Electronics Association, and AARP.

Communications “Toolkit”: NCTA developed a “communications toolkit” for distribution to cable systems and networks to help them communicate with their customers about the digital television transition. NCTA initially distributed the “toolkit” to its member companies in December 2007, and has periodically redistributed it in the first quarter of 2008. The toolkit contains a variety of template communications materials such as long- and short-form brochures and “bill stuffers;” messages designed for digital cable boxes, on-screen scrolls and telephone on-hold announcements; and informational

resources for cable customer contact personnel. The web-based toolkit (at www.ncta.com/dtvtransitionindustrytoolkit) also enables users to view NCTA's PSAs, and an informational video produced by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA).

On-demand Programming and Local Origination Programming: As part of the communications toolkit, NCTA has distributed to its members a nine-minute video tutorial on the benefits of the digital transition, and how cable can help customers navigate through it, produced by CEA. The tutorial can be used on an on-demand or local origination programming basis. Currently, NCTA is working with the Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM) to create additional programming suitable for use in cable local origination and on-demand services. This programming should be completed in time for distribution no later than the third quarter of 2008.

Original research on customer perceptions of the transition: In the fall of 2007, CTAM conducted a nationwide survey of consumers regarding their knowledge of the DTV transition, level of preparedness, and other issues of concern to consumers about the transition.² The survey demonstrated rising levels of awareness by the end of 2007 but still shows a substantial gap to close to achieve near 100 percent awareness. In particular, the survey indicated that groups of consumers with the highest levels of awareness included broadband subscribers, digital cable subscribers, and subscribers to basic cable services; while the lowest levels of awareness appeared to be among consumers living in over-the-air households. The CTAM survey helped NCTA staff, cable industry public affairs executives, and cable industry marketers better understand how to target consumer

² See CTAM News Release regarding PULSE study at <http://www.ctam.com/news/releases/071210.htm>. For the full study, see <http://www.ctam.com/news/pulse111207.pdf>.

education outreach efforts; design messaging to better reach groups most affected by the transition; and evaluate consumer education efforts to date for their effectiveness.

CTAM will continue original research this year to track the levels of awareness and understanding among consumers. In addition, most of the major cable MSOs are conducting research among consumers within their service areas as a preface to designing straight-forward marketing campaigns to reach out to customers and consumers later this year with more information on the transition.

DTV Transition Coalition Leadership

In addition to launching its own consumer education initiative, NCTA is a founding member and leader of the DTV Transition Coalition, a consortium of the broadcast, cable, satellite and consumer electronics industries, as well as a variety of consumer and public interest groups, whose goal is to ensure that American consumers are as informed and prepared as possible for the transition to digital broadcasting. NCTA has been actively engaged in the Coalition's activities, which began over a year ago, in an effort to ensure consistency of consumer messaging and communications planning across industry groups. NCTA has participated in Capitol Hill briefings for staffers of the U.S. House of Representatives (in October 2007) and the U.S. Senate (in February 2008). Representatives of NCTA and CTAM regularly attend and participate in meetings of the full DTV Coalition and meetings and conference calls of the Steering Committee of the DTV Transition Coalition.

NCTA staff members have participated in the design, launch, and updating of the Coalition's website, www.dtvtransition.org. The association has helped plan and launch Coalition outreach activities; assisted in authoring various brochures, communications pieces,

and frequently-asked-question documents for distribution to Coalition member groups; and joined other partners in the Coalition in a wide variety of public policy conferences in Washington, DC, and around the country.

In addition, NCTA has exhibited its DTV education materials in a number of government-sponsored consumer education forums, including the NTIA DTV Transition Expo on September 25, 2007, and the DTV Consumer Education Workshops at the Federal Communications Commission on September 26 and December 4, 2007, and January 31, February 28, and April 1, 2008.

Cable Industry Activities

While NCTA and cable companies are focusing substantial resources on consumer education, NCTA has been active in promoting the transition among other cable organizations which in turn are reaching out to consumers through their own DTV-related activities and initiatives.

As noted above, NCTA has worked closely with its partner organization, CTAM, to help educate cable marketers about the transition, and to recommend messaging for use in cable marketing initiatives designed to educate consumers about the transition. NCTA participates in the CTAM DTV Transition Advisory Committee, which is comprised of top marketing executives from cable operators and programmers, and meets periodically to discuss the transition. NCTA also participated in a nationally-distributed teleseminar sponsored by CTAM to address marketing-related issues for cable companies. Furthermore, CTAM has initiated a series of informational interviews on radio stations around the country to provide direct information to consumers about their options in the course of the transition.

Additionally, NCTA has worked with the Association of Cable Communicators to design an issue brief and a set of recommendations to help cable communications executives better communicate the DTV transition to their various constituencies, including community and civic leaders, and cable customers. NCTA staff members also regularly brief the Cable Center's Cable Customer Service Committee (based in Denver, Colorado), which is comprised of senior cable customer care executives from the industry's leading multiple system operators, on the anticipated impact of the DTV transition on cable customer care processes and facilities.

The cable industry's education foundation, Cable in the Classroom (CIC), recently got involved in DTV consumer education. CIC has created and distributed a brochure for school administrators and teachers to help them navigate the digital transition for television sets located in school buildings. CIC also has added information to its website, www.ciconline.org, to help schools better understand the implications of the DTV transition.³

NCTA staff members have participated in educational panels at cable industry meetings and conferences in a broad number of cities and states. These appearances include presentations to cable associations and organizations in California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. The association has worked with a variety of consumer groups, minority and grassroots organizations to see how it can help get the word out to their varied memberships and constituencies through various media and other forms of communication.

³ Along with consumer education, coordination between broadcasters and cable operators is critical to ensure a successful transition. The industry's chief technical executives and local engineers are working constructively with broadcast organizations and local broadcast stations to help ensure that cable viewers do not experience disruption on or after February 17, 2009.

Monthly Notices in Customers' Bills

Pursuant to the Commission's recently-adopted DTV Consumer Education rules, cable operators, along with other multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs), will begin providing their subscribers with notices about the transition "for over-the-air full power broadcasting from analog to digital service" in the monthly bills or bill notices received by subscribers starting April 30, 2008.⁴ Cable operators are preparing to insert these monthly notices in all customer bills, both paper and electronic, and will continue to do so under the rules on a monthly basis through March 2009.

NCTA had already developed a template for customer "bill stuffers" pursuant to the industry's consumer education initiative announced last fall and it has subsequently revised both the long and short-form versions of the bill inserts consistent with the Commission's new rules.⁵ In addition to alerting customers about the coming end of analog broadcasting and converter box equipment that may be needed for analog sets not connected to cable service, the notices provide information on government and cable company websites and toll-free telephone numbers where consumers may obtain information about the transition and the digital-to-analog converter box program.

⁴ See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Report and Order, MB Docket No. 07-148, rel. March 3, 2008; at ¶¶ 38 - 45; 47 C.F.R. § 76.1630.

⁵ See NCTA brochure/bill stuffer material at http://i.ncta.com/ncta_com/DTV/IndustryToolkit/DTVlongbrochure.pdf and http://i.ncta.com/ncta_com/DTV/IndustryToolkit/DTVlongbrochureSPANISH.pdf (long version); http://i.ncta.com/ncta_com/DTV/IndustryToolkit/DTVshortbrochure.pdf and http://i.ncta.com/ncta_com/DTV/IndustryToolkit/DTVshortbrochureSPANISH.pdf (short version).

CONCLUSION

Since the inception of the DTV transition, cable operators and programmers have worked consistently to promote a smooth transition from analog to digital broadcasting. Cable has promoted the transition by aggressively deploying high-definition services, adding hundreds of digital broadcast channels to cable channel line-ups nationwide, and now is executing a consumer education campaign valued at more than \$200 million to help American consumers understand their options before and during the transition in February 2009.

Cable will continue to run a full schedule of public service advertising through the time of the transition, educate and train its workforce to manage consumer questions, and partner with government, industry and consumer groups to spread the word about the transition. NCTA will continue to update the Commission on a quarterly basis on cable industry progress in DTV consumer education.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Daniel L. Brenner

Rob Stoddard
Senior Vice President
Communications & Public Affairs

David Pierce
Vice President, Public Affairs
Communications & Public Affairs

Daniel L. Brenner
Loretta P. Polk
Counsel for the National Cable &
Telecommunications Association
25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. – Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20001-1431
(202) 222-2445



National Cable & Telecommunications Association
25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW – Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 222-2300

www.ncta.com

Communications & Public Affairs

(202) 222-2350
(202) 222-2351 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 6, 2007

CONTACT: Rob Stoddard/Brian Dietz
202-222-2350

Cable Launches \$200 Million Digital TV Transition Consumer Education Campaign

*English and Spanish language TV commercials to air this fall;
Spots can be viewed at www.ncta.com/DTVSpots*

With the nation's broadcast television system switching to new digital technology in 18 months, the U.S. cable industry is this week launching an extensive consumer education campaign, including English and Spanish language TV advertising valued at \$200 million, designed to reach millions of cable and non-cable viewers with useful information about the digital TV change. The new ads can be viewed at www.ncta.com/DTVSpots.

The campaign was announced today in the attached letter from National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA) President & CEO Kyle McSlarrow to leaders of the House and Senate Commerce Committees, and copied to all Members of Congress.

“As many have pointed out, the simplest and most direct route to communicating with television viewers is through television itself. Thus, we are making a substantial commitment to air \$200 million of English and Spanish language advertising on cable and broadcast television stations and networks. That advertising campaign will start this week and will not conclude until February 2009,” McSlarrow said in the letter.

In addition to the TV advertising, McSlarrow also announced the creation of English and Spanish language informational website material, and other commitments for cable companies to communicate with consumers about the digital transition. These commitments are highlighted in the attached letter.

#

NCTA is the principal trade association for the U.S. cable industry, representing cable operators serving more than 90 percent of the nation's cable television households and more than 200 cable program networks. The cable industry is the nation's largest broadband provider of high-speed Internet access after investing more than \$110 billion over ten years to build a two-way interactive network with fiber optic technology. Cable companies also provide state-of-the-art digital telephone service to millions of American consumers.



National Cable & Telecommunications Association
25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW – Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 222-2300
www.ncta.com

Kyle McSlarrow
President and CEO

(202) 222-2500
(202) 222-2514 Fax

September 6, 2007

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Vice Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Stevens,

In just 18 months, the United States will embark on a dramatic change in over-the-air broadcast television. A successful transition to an all digital broadcast system will make valuable spectrum available for public safety and increased wireless broadband services, and deliver significant benefits to television viewers.

However, as I testified before your Committee in 2005, the cable industry agrees with your assessment that all of the affected industries – not just the broadcast industry – have an important role to play in educating and assisting all consumers about the transition. Thus, we are proud to have been one of the founding members of the DTV Transition Coalition, working with the broadcast, consumer electronics, and satellite industries as well as many, many other consumer and interested organizations to educate the millions of Americans who will be affected by the digital transition. We are committed to helping the DTV Transition Coalition develop and implement a unified message that can be reinforced across multiple platforms.

We also agree that consumer education should start sooner rather than later. Thus, I'm pleased to inform you that the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA), on behalf of our member companies which provide hundreds of networks and video service to 65 million U.S. households, will launch this week a substantial and multifaceted consumer education campaign designed to reach all cable customers and millions of non-cable viewers with useful information about the transition.

As many have pointed out, the simplest and most direct route to communicating with television viewers is through television itself. Thus, we are making a substantial commitment to air \$200 million of English and Spanish language advertising on cable and broadcast television stations and networks. That advertising campaign will start this week and will not conclude until February 2009.

The enclosed DVD includes the first four commercials that will begin airing this week and through the fall on both English and Spanish-language broadcast networks and cable systems. These and subsequent spots will be distributed to cable operators and networks for airing in markets nationwide from now through February 2009. And we fully expect to participate in the development and airing of more public service announcements created by the DTV Transition Coalition.

Because, as I mentioned above, it is important for all affected industries to provide a consistent message directed toward general consumer awareness of the transition, we have intentionally tracked both the language and websites of the DTV Transition Coalition. And, because we also have a responsibility to avoid consumer confusion, we have also attempted to provide a more specific message that is directly relevant to cable customers.

The central goal of any DTV education campaign is to reach and educate those Americans who own an analog TV which receives over-the-air signals only. Thus, these commercials attempt to send three simple messages: 1) the digital transition takes place in February, 2009; 2) if you have a TV hooked up to cable, your provider will manage the transition for you; and, 3) if you have an analog TV receiving over-the-air signals only (regardless of whether you have other TVs hooked up to cable), you will have to take some action, about which you can learn more by visiting www.dtvtransition.org or espanol.dtvtransition.org or the toll-free DTV hotline established by the National Telecommunications & Information Administration.

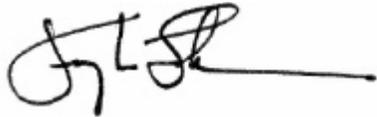
In addition, NCTA has taken the following actions and makes the following commitments on behalf of the cable industry to do our part to ensure a seamless transition for our television viewers:

- NCTA has revamped our website (www.ncta.com) to highlight the digital transition, and today is launching English and Spanish-language websites linked to our homepage that provide consumers with easy-to-understand information, tips and other information about the transition.
- Links on the websites direct users to other government, consumer and industry websites that provide useful consumer information about the transition.
- In 2008, educational messages and reminders about the transition will be sent to all cable customers through monthly statements on invoices and “bill stuffers” in cable bills.
- In 2008, brochures about the transition will be distributed at community and public events.
- A customer communication “tool kit” will be sent to cable systems nationwide before the end of 2007. It will include:
 - invoice messages to be included on billing statements
 - electronic messages for digital cable boxes
 - on-screen scrolls for local origination channels
 - telephone “on-hold” messaging for customer call centers
 - sample emails to be sent to broadband customers
 - website “banners” for MSO and network websites

- Employee communications materials to educate employees about the DTV transition will be distributed to NCTA member companies.
- Local origination and on-demand programming will be created to provide a brief tutorial on the benefits of the digital transition, and how cable can help customers navigate through it.
- Original research on consumer perceptions of the transition will be conducted, and the results will be shared publicly and with other members of the DTV Transition Coalition.

Finally, I appreciate the many constructive suggestions made by you and Members of the Committee, many of which you will see reflected in our commitments listed above. Our industry intends to continue to play a leading role in the DTV Transition Coalition and we look forward to continuing to work with you, the NTIA, and the FCC to ensure a successful digital transition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KLS', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kyle McSlarrow

cc: Members, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate



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Kyle McSlarrow
President and CEO

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September 6, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Markey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Telecommunications
& the Internet
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Telecommunications
& the Internet
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

In just 18 months, the United States will embark on a dramatic change in over-the-air broadcast television. A successful transition to an all digital broadcast system will make valuable spectrum available for public safety and increased wireless broadband services, and deliver significant benefits to television viewers.

However, as I testified before your Committee in 2005, the cable industry agrees with your assessment that all of the affected industries – not just the broadcast industry – have an important role to play in educating and assisting all consumers about the transition. Thus, we are proud to have been one of the founding members of the DTV Transition Coalition, working with the broadcast, consumer electronics, and satellite industries as well as many, many other consumer and interested organizations to educate the millions of Americans who will be affected by the digital transition. We are committed to helping the DTV Transition Coalition develop and implement a unified message that can be reinforced across multiple platforms.

We also agree that consumer education should start sooner rather than later. Thus, I'm pleased to inform you that the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA), on behalf of our member companies which provide hundreds of networks and video service to 65 million U.S. households, will launch this week a substantial and multifaceted consumer education campaign designed to reach all cable customers and millions of non-cable viewers with useful information about the transition.

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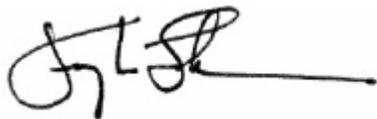
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Kyle McSlarrow

cc: Members, Committee on Energy and Commerce, United States House of Representatives