



Consumer Electronics Association

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October 7, 2008

Hon. Kevin Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

Thank you for your letter dated September 23rd on the digital TV transition and the availability of battery-powered, digital-to-analog converters and DTV receivers as well as battery packs for these devices. We have alerted our member companies about the importance of having a sufficient quantity of battery-powered converters, battery-powered television sets and battery packs available prior to the transition deadline. As discussed below, the manufacturers and retailers are already responding to consumer demand for these products. One manufacturer of coupon-eligible converters now offers a battery pack for its converters as a reasonably-priced accessory; both the converter and the battery pack are widely available. In addition, consumers for more than a year have been able to find battery-powered DTV receivers at many retailers.

CEA is optimistic that over the long term there will be wide-spread availability of additional consumer options in several variations and at different price points, as has already occurred with other television and portable products. You may recall that similar concerns were voiced about the availability of digital-to-analog converters as well as digital-to-analog converters with analog pass-through. The marketplace has obviously responded in both cases.

For many years, consumers bought millions of battery-operated televisions. Many enjoy viewing portable models at sporting events; others take them on their hunting, fishing or camping trips. For still others they serve as a backup source for news and information in the event of a power failure. The transition to digital television should not dampen demand for these devices. Indeed, the marketplace is already responding as evidenced by the appearance of a new accessory category – the Converter Battery Pack¹ – and the fact that battery-powered DTV receivers are already a well-established and popular product category.

¹ This product category was created in response to market demand and not as a result of government regulation. In developing specifications for Coupon-Eligible Converter Boxes, NTIA permitted but did not require manufacturers to provide converter boxes that operate on battery power as well as those which use an external AC/DC power input. Rules to Implement and Administer a Coupon Program for Digital to Analog Converter Boxes, 72 Fed. Reg. 12,097, 12,109 (Mar. 15, 2007); *see also* 47 C.F.R. 301, Appendix 2. For the marketplace response, *see* http://www.winegard.com/mobile/dig_receiver.htm.

Consumers wishing to upgrade to battery-powered DTVs now find a number of alternatives from which to choose, including models available for as little as \$150.² We expect that demand for the newer models will meet or exceed that of their analog predecessors and that our members will respond with more alternatives. As the Commission has noted on several occasions, the general trend for new consumer electronics products is that they become more affordable over time.

More broadly, CEA remains committed to educating consumers, retailers, manufacturers and legislators about the digital television transition. Among other things:

- CEA is a founding member of the DTV Transition Coalition, an organization of more than 240 active and diverse members, whose objective is to educate as many constituencies as possible. We developed and help raise awareness of the coalition's popular and highly educational website (www.DTVtransition.org);
- Most recently, CEA partnered with the FCC, the NTIA, Circuit City and WECT news for a DTV education weekend in Wilmington, NC prior to that city's migration to digital television on September 8th. To help make the transition in Wilmington a success, CEA made a large donation of converter boxes to senior centers in the area that did not have cable or satellite service. CEA also distributed information about the transition at the Wilmington Shark's baseball game and participated in various TV interviews with CEA's Digital Answer Man. Finally, CEA hosted an "Ask the Experts" day at the local Circuit City. This consumer-focused and family-friendly event provided Wilmington residents answers to all their DTV questions.
- CEA actively participated in a wide and diverse array of consumer and trade events, including last summer's Hearing Loss Association of America convention in Reno, NV, the NAACP Convention in Cincinnati, OH and the AARP Convention in Washington, DC. CEA will also participate in the Iowa DTV Symposium, where our CEO, Gary Shapiro, will be the keynote speaker, and in the Community Broadcaster Association's DTV National Convention;

² See, e.g., models available now from Dynex®, <http://www.bestbuy.com/site/olspage.jsp?skuId=8870046&st=digital+portable+tv&lp=3&type=product&cp=1&id=1210377520598>;

Accurian™, <http://www.radioshack.com/product/index.jsp?productId=2855063&cp=2032057.2032170&f=PAD%2FTV+Technology%2FLCD&fbx=0&allCount=51&fbc=1&fr=StorePrice%2FRSK%2F00010000%2F00019999&fbn=Price%2F%24100.00+-+%24199.99&parentPage=family>;

LCCDigital™, http://www.lcddigital.tv/7_tv_digital.html, http://www.lcddigital.tv/8_tv-digital.html;

Coby®, [Coby® TFTV1022 10" LCD HDTV](#); and

Axion™, <http://www.amazon.com/Axion-AXN-8701-Widescreen-Portable-Handheld/dp/B001FWYLLG>.

- CEA has participated in FCC and Congressional DTV Workshops;
- CEA and Google will co-host a YouTube contest encouraging consumers to show how they helped transition their friends and family to digital. We hope the contest will encourage the YouTube community to spread the DTV message. With the help of Whiskey Falls, a popular country music band, the contest will kick off in October and run through early December, culminating with one winner being awarded a new home theater system.

I hope you find this information helpful. We will continue to work with all our partners to ensure that consumer demand for the full range of DTV transition-related products will be met. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Shapiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being more prominent than the last name "Shapiro".

Gary Shapiro
President and CEO
Consumer Electronics Association