

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

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| In the Matter of |) | |
| |) | |
| International Comparison and Consumer |) | GN Docket No. 09-47 |
| Survey Requirements in the Broadband |) | |
| Data Improvement Act |) | |
| |) | |
| A National Broadband Plan for Our Future |) | GN Docket No. 09-51 |
| |) | |
| Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of |) | GN Docket No. 09-137 |
| Advanced Telecommunications Capability |) | |
| To All Americans in a Reasonable and |) | |
| Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to |) | |
| Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to |) | |
| Section 706 of the Telecommunications |) | |
| Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband |) | |
| Data Improvement Act |) | |

To: Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
Attention: The Commission

**COMMENTS OF SOUTH CAROLINA
EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION COMMISSION
IN RESPONSE TO NBP PUBLIC NOTICE # 26**

South Carolina Educational Television Commission (SCETV) provides these comments in response to the Commission’s Public Notice¹ seeking comment in the referenced dockets on spectrum for broadband.

We are the licensee of a statewide network of eleven (11) noncommercial educational television stations in South Carolina: WEBA-TV, Allendale; WJWJ-TV, Beaufort; WITV(TV), Charleston; WRLK-TV, Columbia; WHMC(TV), Conway; WJPM-TV, Florence; WNTV(TV), Greenville; WNEH(TV), Greenwood; WNSC-TV, Rock Hill;

¹ *Data Sought on Uses of Spectrum - NBP Public Notice #26*, GN Docket Nos. 09-47, 09-51, 09-137, Public Notice, DA 09-2518 (rel. December 2, 2009) (the “Public Notice”).

WRET-TV, Spartanburg; and WRJA-TV, Sumter. SCETV provides educational programming to every corner of the Palmetto state, and has been on the cutting edge of broadcasting technology for much of our 50-year history.

In the Public Notice, with a mind toward finding additional spectrum to allocate for wireless broadband purposes, the Commission seeks specific data on the use of spectrum currently licensed to broadcast television stations. Among other things, the FCC is attempting to account for the value that the country puts on free, over-the-air television. As reflected in the information we provide below, we urge to Commission to find that our use of our licensed television broadcast channels is exceptionally efficient and productive, and brings great value to our community. The cost to us and to our community resulting from the loss or curtailment of our over-the-air transmission service would be enormous and unacceptable.

Comments

SCETV is currently using the full capacity of our 19.39 Mbit ATSC bandwidth, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are broadcasting three separate streams of noncommercial educational programming:

(1) **ETV HD:** Our primary channel features first-run national programming (including shows from content providers such as Public Broadcasting Service, American Public Television, the National Educational Telecommunications Association, and more), as well as the plethora of programs produced in our own studios.

(2) **The South Carolina Channel:** With the launch of this channel in 2003, SCETV became the first South Carolina broadcaster to multi-cast. Today, it features the

CreateTV lineup (the best of how-to, travel and cooking shows), as well as regional and South Carolina-centric programs that are of interest to our local viewers.

(3) **ETV World:** Our third channel launched in 2009 and focuses on local, national and international news and public affairs programs.

Although SCETV strives to lead the way in broadcasting advancements, including technology, the fact remains that not all South Carolinians are able to take advantage of our services. **Fifty-three percent (53%)** of South Carolina is considered to be rural, and in many of these places, it is not profitable for cable companies to extend service. As a result, an estimated **one (1) out of every five (5) state citizens** receives his or her television signal over the air.

Accordingly, if we were to lose our ability to use our over-the-air (OTA) broadcast spectrum, a full **20 percent** of our state population would not have access to the myriad of educational programs we provide. SCETV was founded with the goal of bringing equity in education to all of its citizens, and we would be greatly hindered in fulfilling this mission if such a large segment of our state was denied access to our primary outreach method.

However, even the urban areas of the state would be greatly affected by the loss of this broadcast spectrum. Among those who subscribe to cable or satellite, many are still unable to access all three of our programming streams because these providers are only required to carry one feed. In addition, while a full 20% of our state receives only OTA transmissions, many more households that pay for television service also still make use of at least one other TV set that continues to receive an OTA signal. Cutting off access to this spectrum would also remove the present availability of our programming for these viewers.

What would our citizens be missing, and why is it so vital that we keep this broadcasting spectrum available?

From the twelve (12) hours per day of award-winning children's programming such as "Sesame Street" that are crucial in helping promote early learning for toddlers to our many locally-produced programs that inform our state on issues unique to South Carolinians, SCETV programming is something our citizens depend on every day, especially in rural areas where other educational and information resources are often lacking. For instance, SCETV utilizes its broadcast capacity in connection with a number of outreach programs that directly address many societal issues faced by the citizens of our state, including:

- **Health and Healthcare Awareness:** A week of local and nationally produced programs that focus not only on the current healthcare reform topic, but also on some of the major crises affecting our residents, including Diabetes, cancer, childhood obesity, heart disease, stroke, and more.
- **Remember My Name:** A week of local award-winning programs that uncovers the issue of domestic violence. For many years, South Carolina has been among the top 5 states in the nation in terms of the number of deaths resulting from domestic violence.
- **Give Me Shelter:** A week of local and national productions that expose the problem of homelessness in our state.
- **Teen Survival Week:** A week of specials that focus on helping teens make smart decisions concerning matters such as drugs and alcohol use. The specials premiered immediately before prom season and high school graduations to help curb fatal accidents during that vulnerable time of year.
- **Making It Grow!:** A weekly series that focuses on gardening and agricultural issues. This program serves a vital need in our rural state, where farming and agriculture are the number one economic driver.
- **ETV Forum:** This occasional series explores many social issues, but over the past few years has focused on financial matters, in large part because South Carolina has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Recent episodes have discussed how viewers can protect themselves from identity theft, how to survive the economic downturn, the mortgage crisis, South Carolina's unemployment woes, and more.

- **The Big Picture:** SCETV's weekly news and public affairs program localizes current issues with complex analysis and by featuring local and national guests who provide the resources necessary to help bring about change. Some recent episodes examined the issue of child abuse in South Carolina, reform of parole policies in the state, local swine flu concerns, and the effect of recent budget cuts on the services that state agencies are able to offer citizens.
- **Connections:** This is SCETV's weekly public affairs program and online discussion about issues that impact South Carolina's minority population. Delivering information and answers, Connections addresses everyday issues affecting local residents. From entrepreneurship to education, to health and history, the program provides additional opportunities for minorities in the state to voice opinions and concerns.
- **Southern Lens:** This weekly series of independent films by southern filmmakers looks at both the positive and negative sides of life in the south, including celebrating the Intracoastal waterways that run from Virginia to Florida, and the controversial practice of coal mining through "mountain top removal." This series has even brought about change to South Carolina state law after a legislator viewed a "Sentencing the Victim" program and proceeded to change the parole hearings process.
- **Carolina Stories:** The programs that air as part of this weekly documentary series are created by SCETV producers and focus on the history and culture of our state.
- **ETV Debates:** Each political season, viewers turn to SCETV for commercial-free televised debates with local candidates for statewide office. Additionally, SCETV has provided in-depth analysis of many statewide referendum issues.
- **Statehouse Today:** Gavel-to-gavel coverage of the South Carolina General Assembly is broadcast on SCETV World, our public affairs channel, ensuring that South Carolina maintains an open-government process. This programming also allows citizens access to the goings-on of our state government.
- **Expeditions and NatureScene:** These two award-winning programs educate our viewers about the natural world around them and how we can live in harmony with nature.
- **In Our Schools:** This program highlights the latest scholastic achievements and also tackles some of the important issues affecting South Carolina's public schools.
- **Black History Teleconference:** 2010 will mark the 23rd year for this annual event, which is presented nationally and features high school students who have an opportunity to direct questions to seven prominent African Americans about their ideas, challenges, and achievements in relation to each year's national theme.

In addition to these regularly scheduled programs, ETV also covers South Carolina's arts scene. For instance, SCETV provides annual coverage of the **Spoletto Festival USA** in Charleston, and has recently featured major works such as the **Turner to Cezanne** art exhibit and a dance performance of **Martha Graham's "Sketches from 'Chronicle.'**"

On top of all of these public affairs, local and cultural programs, SCETV also produces countless other documentaries each year that profile many of South Carolina's biggest names (including politicians, authors, actors, and other movers and shakers) and/or events (such as the 40th anniversary of the Orangeburg Massacre and the raising of the Confederate submarine Hunley from the bottom of the ocean) that have left an indelible mark on the Palmetto State.

In sum, SCETV already makes extraordinarily productive and efficient use of all of its existing channel capacity, through HD and SD streams that bring a remarkable array of important programming to residents of the state of South Carolina. A substantial portion of the state's residents remain fully reliant on over-the-air signals to receive television service and access to SCETV's full schedule of public TV offerings. Any loss of spectrum would have far-reaching and devastatingly negative impact on SCETV's statewide viewership and their access to important information, as well as our ability to continue to serve our constituency.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing reasons, we urge the Commission to find that our use of our television broadcast channels is efficient and productive, and abundantly serves the public

interest. Our over-the-air transmission capabilities must be protected in any effort that the Commission might undertake to allocate more spectrum for wireless broadband systems.

Respectfully submitted,

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATIONAL
TELEVISION COMMISSION**

By: /s/ David Crouch
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