

Office of the Mayor • City of Tallahassee
300 South Adams Street • Tallahassee, FL 32301 • 850.891.2000



April 1, 2014

Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Black Television News Channel DBS Public Interest Space Support Letter

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As Mayor of Florida's Capital City, and Vice-Chair of the United States Conference of Mayors' Communications Committee, I am honored to write this letter of support for the Black Television News Channel (BTNC), a network slated to be the nation's first 24-hour cable news channel dedicated to African American communities.

It is my understanding that BTNC seeks approval from the Federal Communications Commission to temporarily occupy the Direct Broadcast Satellite Public Interest Space. Absent this approval, I am told that BTNC will not have sufficient distribution to sustain its original programming, which clearly classifies as public interest.

I urge due consideration of this request and fully support this venture for many reasons; for one, the distribution of educational and culturally inspired programming, specific to our African American communities is long overdue. During a period of time when black media outlets are struggling to survive, or have disappeared altogether—the launch of this black news network is critical, and has the ability to be a major economic and social benefit throughout my city, the state of Florida, our nation and abroad.

Secondly, its projects like BTNC that drive our local economy, and move our state and nation forward. Florida State University's Center for Economic Forecasting has estimated that the network will contribute approximately \$33.6 million dollars annually to the Tallahassee community, and will create over 100 clean jobs, paying 150% of the city's average MSA.

Lastly, this past week, I participated in a signing ceremony announcing the public-private partnership of BTNC with the nation's largest public Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Florida A&M University.

Aside from the major economic footprint that BTNC will emboss onto our local community, BTNC will serve as a hub for recruitment and training for young black journalists, providing an outlet for job training in the areas of broadcast engineering, communications, graphic arts, journalism, and broadcast sales in targeted minority communities.

BTNC's programming will provide access to information and educational programming to meet the specific needs of a growing and dynamic population; the network will shed light on the unique social, economic, and political challenges facing many of our minority communities; and BTNC seeks to build a bridge to provide better understanding between our nation's diverse cultures.

As Mayor of the City of Tallahassee, I sincerely support this project and recognize its ability to create jobs, spear economic growth, and generate a heightened sense of social awareness throughout our city, state, nation and abroad. I implore you to visit www.blacktelevisionnewschannel.info, for additional info about this project, and I urge favorable consideration upon the Commission's decision for BTNC to occupy the DBS Public Interest Space.

Should you have any questions regarding my level of support, please feel free to contact me at 850-891-2000, or via email at John.Marks@talgov.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Marks, III". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John R. Marks, III
Mayor, City of Tallahassee