

August 25, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: MB Docket No. 14-57

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As President and Chief Executive Officer of Crown Media Family Networks, home to Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, I support the proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner Cable.

Crown Media is an independent programmer. No multichannel video programming distributor or broadcaster owns an attributable ownership interest in it. Crown Media is not a media conglomerate with numerous linear channels, and it does not have the leverage resulting from retransmission consent.

Nonetheless, for more than a decade, Comcast has been not only one of the largest, but also one of the most supportive, distributors of Hallmark Channel. Crown Media has had a nationwide distribution agreement with Comcast since 2003. Comcast has launched and distributed Hallmark Channel in highly-penetrated tiers, and it is typically available to subscribers of Comcast's Digital Economy or Digital Starter tiers, with over 19 million subscribers. Likewise, since Hallmark Movies & Mysteries (formerly Hallmark Movie Channel) launched in 2008, Comcast has been one of its most supportive distributors and now delivers over 17 million of the channel's subscribers on digital tiers. Comcast's early and deep distribution of both channels has spurred their growth and increased original programming.

Comcast's distribution of Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries contributes substantially to the diversity of programming available to viewers. Both channels offer high quality, family friendly programming, that is informative and entertaining. We strive to offer engaging and inspirational programming that families will watch together. The channels feature numerous original movies and series each year, covering a wide range of genres, including dramas, comedies, mysteries, and westerns. In fact, this year alone, Hallmark Channel will air more than 550 hours of original premiere programming. Its Cedar Cove series has been well-received by viewers and acclaimed by critics such that it presently ranks No. 1 in household viewing on Saturdays in the 8-9 p.m. slot.

Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries also are the undisputed leaders in family holiday programming, broadcasting over 1250 hours of original and classic holiday movies during the 2013 Christmas season. The channels have featured a mix of original movies and classic holiday offerings, including the annual "Countdown to Christmas" block; recent Christmas in July programming special; romance-themed shows during February; Mother's and Father's Day-related specials; and Halloween special programming as well.

Our family-friendly programming, consistent with the trusted and widely-recognized Hallmark brand, and Comcast's committed distribution have helped make Hallmark Channel one of the most popular general entertainment networks. Comcast's wide-spread distribution of the Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries reflects a genuine commitment to programming diversity and to family programming because we do not have other leverage (such as retransmission consent) to force such carriage. One need only look at Comcast's programming schedule to recognize that it similarly distributes other independent channels with diverse programming, whether family-friendly, minority-owned or programmed, or presented in foreign languages.

Given Comcast's long history of being one of the most supportive distributors of unaffiliated and independent programmers, we believe the proposed Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger will be a positive development not only for the Hallmark channels, but also for other unaffiliated and independent networks.

Sincerely,



William J. Abbott

President & Chief Executive Officer

cc: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Mr. Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel (TransactionTeam@fcc.gov)
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