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October 10, 2008

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

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

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc. (“NCTA”) hereby submits its third report on the cable industry’s consumer education efforts in conjunction with broadcast stations’ 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

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

The National Cable & Telecommunications Association (“NCTA”) hereby submits its third report to the Commission on the association’s consumer education initiatives in conjunction with the broadcast industry’s transition to digital television (DTV). As a DTV.gov transition partner, NCTA provides the following update, incorporating by reference its ongoing DTV consumer education campaign and related activities discussed in the April 10, 2008 and July 10, 2008 reports.<sup>1</sup>

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 suppliers of equipment and services to the industry. The cable industry is also the nation’s largest broadband provider of high speed Internet access after investing \$130 billion since 1996 to build out a two-way interactive network with fiber optic technology.

**DTV Consumer Education PSAs**

As NCTA has discussed in its two previous quarterly reports, the cable industry committed early-on to help lead, not just participate in, a nationwide consumer campaign to alert all Americans about the digital transition and to educate consumers about the tools available to help manage the transition.<sup>2</sup> The industry’s 18-month multi-media consumer education campaign, *Get Ready for Digital TV*, launched in September 2007, has informed millions of cable customers and non-cable viewers about the broadcasters’ DTV transition and how to

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<sup>1</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Report from National Cable & Telecommunications Association, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, MB Docket No. 07-148, Apr. 10, 2008, July 10, 2008 (NCTA first and second quarterly reports).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. NCTA News Release, Sept. 26, 2007.

ensure continued service to analog television sets after the transition. The centerpiece of this campaign is the industry's commitment to provide \$200 million in commercial advertising time through public service announcements (PSAs) about the digital transition to air through February 2009.

We are pleased to report that from September 2007 through July 2008 (the most recent data), the value of the total airtime in which cable operators and programmers ran DTV PSAs amounts to more than \$183 million. In July 2008, we reported cumulative expenditures of \$94 million (September 2007 to April 2007) on PSAs. The third quarterly report figure shows the dramatically greater frequency that the cable industry ran the ads between April and July 2008. The industry expects to more than meet its commitment before the transition date.<sup>3</sup>

Since the campaign started, NCTA has distributed eight different PSAs in a variety of versions and lengths to its member cable operators and programming networks along with media plans for their use. And in an effort to reach a wider audience, several of these spots have been made available in both English and Spanish language versions. Some NCTA member companies also have created their own PSAs appropriate for their individual audiences and customer demographics.

In addition to NCTA's ads, more than twenty cable networks have produced customer awareness and education television ads, which will be aired by the top ten and many smaller cable companies, beginning in October 2008. These spots explain the impact of the transition on cable customers and how they can be sure all TV sets in the home will work after February 17, 2009. The spots also encourage customers to help their friends and family with over-the-air TV

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<sup>3</sup> The Cable and Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM) surveys cable companies monthly to request reporting data on the number of times that PSAs on the digital transition have run and the commensurate commercial value of that time.

sets prepare for the switchover to digital. The cable networks are featuring recognizable talent to reach a wide variety of customer demographic segments, including Hispanic, African American, baby boomer and other age groups, and family targets.

Finally, cable operators are not only running cable-originated ads but the DTV public service announcements produced by broadcasters are also airing on the stations carried on their systems.

### **Other Consumer Education Initiatives**

Along with public service announcements, NCTA and its member companies continue to engage in a variety of public outreach and marketing activities launched under the *Get Ready for Digital TV* banner, including:

- web content about the transition in both English and Spanish targeted at cable customers ([www.GetReadyForDigitalTV.com](http://www.GetReadyForDigitalTV.com) and [www.prepareparatvdigital.com](http://www.prepareparatvdigital.com)) with links to government and other industry sites containing DTV information. The total number of unique visitors to NCTA websites stands at more than 43,000 and these visitors have viewed more than 110,200 pages.
- a communications “toolkit” distributed to cable systems and networks presenting various avenues to reach consumers with DTV messaging; the toolkit was initially distributed in December 2007, and has been updated and redistributed several times in 2008.<sup>4</sup>
- a commitment to conduct original research regarding consumer perceptions of the transition, the results of which have been shared with other DTV

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.ncta.com/dtvtransitionindustrytoolkit](http://www.ncta.com/dtvtransitionindustrytoolkit).

Transition Coalition members. CTAM continues original research to track the levels of awareness and most of the major cable MSOs are conducting research among consumers within their service areas as well.

As previously reported, NCTA has partnered with the Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing (CTAM), which has brought its marketing and research expertise to consumer education.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, CTAM has worked to create additional programming suitable for use in cable local origination and on-demand services. Retirement Living Television produced a special two-minute video for cable companies to run on their On Demand and online platforms, designed to educate customers and, specifically, explain how to manage unconnected or “secondary” sets.

On September 17, 2008, the cable industry conducted a national radio news media tour to inform consumers of all the options to prepare for the transition. Steve Effros, a cable industry veteran and DTV subject matter expert, conducted 17 live interviews in major markets, and a syndicated taped version has aired more than 50 times totaling almost 5 million media impressions. The industry expects to field a second tour in late 2008.

CTAM also distributed a syndicated educational column designed for placement in smaller market newspapers and journals across the U.S. in mid-September 2008. To date, the effort has garnered 26 million media impressions. A second column will be distributed in mid-October.

NCTA also continues to participate in regular meetings of the DTV Coalition, the consortium of broadcast, cable, satellite, consumer electronics industries and other interested

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<sup>5</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Further Notice, MB Docket No. 07-148, Comments of NCTA, July 27, 2008; First Quarterly DTV.gov Partner Report, April 10, 2008; Second Quarterly Report, July 10, 2008.

groups, to ensure consistent messaging in inter-industry consumer education efforts. The Coalition has grown to more than 200 members.

### **Outreach to Community and Grassroots Organizations**

For over a year, NCTA has worked with a variety of consumer and public interest groups, minority and grassroots organizations to help get the word out to their varied memberships and constituencies through media and other forms of communication. Last summer, the industry stepped up its outreach to a broader base of civic and civil rights organizations.

Recognizing that a significant number of Americans – including low income groups – are at risk from the cut-off of analog over-the-air television, NCTA undertook a major outreach effort to educate these consumers on how to prepare for the transition. NCTA requested proposals from several major civic and civil rights organizations in the country, including minority and labor organizations, people with disabilities, and rural groups. Based on these proposals, twenty organizations were selected to receive funding from NCTA to assist in their efforts to educate their respective constituencies about the digital transition.

NCTA has produced print materials, including flyers and fact sheets, tailored to each organization. The materials were translated into a variety of languages including Spanish, traditional and simplified Chinese, Hmong, Vietnamese, Korean, Laotian, and Khmer. The organizations have been and continue to be trained in the technical aspects of the transition and how to best use the educational materials. Many have, in turn, incorporated NCTA materials into their own publications, online content, educational programs and media forums.

The organizations participating in the program include Asian American Justice Center, Hispanic Federation, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, League of Rural Voters, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), National Council of La Raza,

Rainbow/Push, NAACP Boston, and American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), among others. NCTA will continue to work with these and other organizations in the months leading up to the transition date.

### **Monthly Customer Bill Notices**

Along with the industry's voluntary consumer education campaign, cable operators are communicating directly with every cable household each month through notices about the DTV transition in customers' bills, pursuant to the Commission's March 3, 2008 Order in this proceeding.<sup>6</sup> The detailed monthly notices, which started April 30, 2008, are inserted in all paper and electronic bills and will continue through March 2009.

As set forth in the FCC rules, the notices alert customers about the cessation of analog broadcasting and converter box equipment that may be needed for analog sets not connected to cable service in order to ensure continued viewing. They also 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.

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<sup>6</sup> See *In the Matter of DTV Consumer Education Initiative*, Further Notice, Report and Order, MB Docket No. 07-148, rel. March 3, 2008, at ¶¶ 1, 5. See 47 C.F.R. § 76.1630.

**CONCLUSION**

Educating consumers about the DTV transition has been a major priority of the cable industry over the past year. The industry will continue to do its part to inform cable customers and many non-cable consumers about the transition through a variety of means through the February 2009 transition date. And it will continue to partner with government, industry and other organizations to help spread the word to the public about the transition.

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Daniel L. Brenner**

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