



TIA Policy Statement on the Digital Television Transition

- Digital Television (DTV) is a far more flexible and efficient broadcast technology than the current analog system. Digital TV broadcasters can provide sharp "high definition" (HDTV) programs or multiple "standard definition" DTV programs simultaneously. Broadcasters also can use DTV to provide interactivity and data services that are not possible with analog technology. These advancements will benefit the hundreds of millions viewers of broadcast television in the U.S.
- Converting to DTV will clear valuable spectrum for other important uses, such as advanced wireless services and public safety services including police, fire departments, and rescue squads. The DTV transition will clear 108 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band. The propagation characteristics of this particular spectrum band make it extremely desirable for new, innovative broadband applications and state-of-the-art first responder communications. Of this 108 MHz, 24 MHz has been allocated for public safety uses, including interoperable communication channels. The need for this spectrum has reached a critical point.
- The completion of the DTV transition will lead to a major increase in the amount of valuable spectrum available for public safety use. Of the 108 MHz of analog broadcast spectrum, 24 MHz has been allocated for public safety uses, including interoperable communication channels. This spectrum will assist first responders during national and local emergencies and will increase the ability of public safety agencies to interoperate across jurisdictional lines. The importance of this spectrum reclamation is greatest in major metropolitan areas, where the threat against our citizens is greatest and where spectrum shortages are most severe. The FCC has already adopted a TIA standard for interoperable communications for much of the spectrum designated for public safety use in this band. However, fully standardized, interoperable solutions cannot be deployed in areas where it is needed most until the DTV transition is complete.
- TIA strongly supports the desire of Congress and the FCC to promote more efficient use of spectrum and to create opportunities for new and additional uses of wireless communications by the American public. Wireless broadband platforms are an increasingly popular alternative for business and residential consumers to access the Internet. Moreover, wireless technologies have the potential to deliver broadband service to rural and underserved areas and to compete with existing and future wired broadband technologies. TIA believes it is important to encourage the deployment of advanced wireless networks that can support converged communications services offering consumers competitive choices for voice, video and data applications.

- The absence of a date certain for completion of the digital to analog transition is delaying the provision of significant benefits to the American public. Some companies in the high tech industry are delaying the commercial development and/or deployment of high-speed wireless broadband equipment and/or services due to the uncertainty clouding the DTV transition. Other companies who already hold licenses for some of the spectrum auctioned by the FCC cannot deploy new wireless services on it until the DTV transition ends. Additional auctions of this spectrum for licensed commercial services are on hold. Consumers in rural America must continue to wait for broadband access. Moreover, new opportunities for interoperable public safety wireless communications are being deferred, with negative impacts to homeland security. For these reasons, TIA strongly urges Congress to set a date certain of December 31, 2008 for completion of the DTV transition.
- Establishing a date certain for the DTV transition will also help drive the market for digital products and will provide the requisite certainty for manufacturers seeking to produce low-cost digital-to-analog converters that will enable consumers to continue to use their analog television sets following the transition. To the extent Congress finds that market forces are insufficient to ensure that households are able to view digital broadcast signals, Congress should design an efficient transitional mechanism, funded by auction proceeds, to address this issue. Congress also should require that any consumer incentives to purchase new digital products for terrestrial broadcast reception be technology and product neutral.

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