



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

January 28, 2008

Dear Colleague:

At the 2007 NARUC Summer Meetings, the Association passed a resolution urging its members to help our federal partners at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the National Telecommunications Information Agency (NTIA), and in Congress to alert consumers of the impending “DTV Transition.” On February 17, 2009, a little over one year from now, television stations around the country will discontinue analog broadcasts and only broadcast in “digital”. Before that deadline, millions of consumers that have analog TV sets and rely on antennas to receive free broadcast signals will need to obtain a separate digital-to-analog converter to watch over-the-air TV, or lose service. NTIA is currently administering a coupon program, set to end on March 31, 2009, which permits all U.S. households to request up to two coupons (while supplies last), worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two of the needed digital-to-analog converters.

The conversion to digital broadcasting is necessary to free up parts of the scarce and valuable broadcast spectrum, which can then be used for other important wireless communications services, such as public safety communications (police and fire departments, emergency rescue) and advanced commercial wireless services. However, this DTV Transition has the potential to negatively impact access to broadcast TV programming by millions of American consumers nationwide as of the February 2009 deadline. Both the FCC and the NTIA have specifically asked NARUC, among many other groups, to assist them in assuring that consumers get word of the transition – including information on when a converter is necessary and how to get the NTIA coupon.

Despite the fact that State utility commissions are not tasked with regulating any part of this transition, it is likely that the consumers in your State will turn to you for answers. In anticipation of this, NARUC has collected information from numerous agencies, such as FCC and NTIA, to provide comprehensive answers for NARUC members and their constituents. This information was presented at the 2007 Annual Convention in Anaheim, California and is also available on the NARUC website (<http://www.naruc.org/DTV/>). Please feel free to provide a link on your commission website to the NARUC information which will be updated on a regular basis. If you have any questions or if you need more information, you can contact Brad Ramsay at jramsay@naruc.org or Brian O’Hara at bohara@naruc.org.

Sincerely,

Ron Jones
Commissioner, Tennessee Regulatory Authority
Chairman, NARUC Committee on Consumer Affairs