

Ensuring Television Viewer Choice and Innovation

On February 17, 2012, Congress approved legislation allowing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct spectrum incentive auctions. Such an auction would allow TV stations that voluntarily give up spectrum to share in part of the auction proceeds. Since the FCC proposed the incentive auction concept in its March 2010 National Broadband Plan, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) has supported incentive auctions provided they are truly voluntary and do not harm broadcasters that choose not to participate or the tens of millions of Americans who rely on free, over-the-air broadcasting.

Members of Congress pursued the spectrum legislation primarily to achieve three key public policy goals:

1. Generating revenue necessary to build a nationwide interoperable public safety network;
2. Making more spectrum available to wireless companies for mobile broadband; and
3. Allowing broadcasters who are willing to relinquish their channels to share in the proceeds generated by the sale of that spectrum.

Policymakers also included in the legislation certain safeguards necessary to ensure viewers retain access to a vibrant broadcasting industry for generations to come, including:

- Signal contour protections to ensure local TV stations can continue to reach the same viewers and geographic areas;
- No forced move for stations from UHF to VHF, which maintains local TV stations' ability to innovate and provide new services for viewers in the future;
- A one-time auction and a relocation fund of \$1.75 billion to offset costs incurred by local stations that are moved to different channels following an auction; and
- Language guaranteeing continued viewer access to TV station signals along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

We are pleased that Congress recognized the value of broadcasting and included language in the bill that ensures local TV stations have the ability to innovate and provide viewers with the news, emergency information, sports and entertainment they expect and deserve.

Even in the Internet age, broadcasting remains the most efficient medium for consumers to receive video programming through their favorite mobile devices. Expanding broadband access the right way means not only making additional spectrum available for mobile broadband, but also retaining access to broadcast TV and expanding the platforms on which consumers can access broadcast video.

In the months and years to come, the FCC will implement this new law. It is important that Congress maintain strong oversight so that the safeguards included in the bill are implemented as Congress intended.

Will you help to ensure that the FCC properly implements the spectrum legislation as Congress intended so that local stations and the viewers that rely on broadcast programming are not harmed?