

Via Email: coupon@ntia.doc.gov

June 6, 2008

Milton Brown  
Office of the Chief Counsel  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue, Room 4713  
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Comments with respect to:  
The Household Eligibility and Application  
Process of the Coupon Program for  
Individuals Residing in Nursing Homes and  
Households that Utilize Post Office Boxes;  
Waiver

Dear Mr. Brown:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Metropolitan Area Communications Commission in response to the National Telecommunications Infrastructure Administration's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) regarding the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program and its applicability to nursing homes and other similar residential care facilities. These comments respond specifically to the request for information on points raised in the NPRM.

The Metropolitan Area Communications Commission (MACC) represents approximately 120,000 subscribers to cable television services in fifteen local jurisdictions in Northwest Oregon. Our jurisdictions (the cities of Banks, Beaverton, Cornelius, Durham, Forest Grove, Gaston, Hillsboro, King City, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, North Plains, Rivergrove, Tigard, Tualatin; and Washington County) rely on this agency to negotiate cable television franchise agreements and advise residents and agencies about video service, including the effects of digital transition.

**We recommend that NTIA approve the proposed rule and extend the availability of these coupons to residential care facilities in a less parsimonious fashion than is proposed in the NPRM.**

We recommend that the definition of eligible nursing home include any residential care facility that serves three or more elderly residents in a group setting.

The Portland Designated Market Area (DMA), of which MACC is a part, has one of the country's lowest rates for cable and satellite penetration (the number of households that subscribe to cable television or satellite-based television programming). While MACC is unable to provide authoritative numbers on the number of residential care facilities in our area that will need

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Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupons (Coupon), there is a substantial likelihood that many of our residents would benefit from this program.

In MACC's fifteen jurisdictions (population 570,000), there are more than 290 Adult Foster Care homes serving at least 1,400 residents. In addition, there are more than 93 Assisted Living Facilities, Nursing Homes and Residential Care Facilities, serving approximately 3,300 residents. The OSCAR database lists only a dozen of the more than 380 facilities that might be affected in our area. The use of the OSCAR database to establish eligibility is inadequate.

After February 17, 2009, these 4,700 residents are at risk of being excluded from the off-air news, information and entertainment to which they currently have ready access.

The NPRM proposes three methods by which applicants can receive coupons. MACC believes all options are **unnecessarily complicated and intrusive** – requiring social security numbers and other personal information. This information is not required for others applying for a Coupon.

Alternatives should be immediately explored, including the ability to grant at least one Coupon to any documented residential care facility without requiring information beyond that which is required of other Coupon applicants. An affidavit by a facility administrator that the application is on behalf of one or more residents should be sufficient. The more complicated procedures of the NPRM may be invoked if NTIA receives more than one application for a single address, if then.

MACC supports the proposed rule, with the above caveats.

Sincerely,



Bruce Crest  
Administrator

cc: MACC Commissioners  
JoAnn Herrigel, City of Milwaukie  
Nancy Werner, Beery Elsner & Hammond  
Rick Bennett, AARP Oregon  
Grover Simmons, Independent Adult Foster Home Association – Oregon  
Lauren Rhoades, Oregon Health Care Association