

***Ex Parte* Meeting Summary
DTV Converter Box Coupon Program**

Date: July 21, 2006

Outside Attendees: Marsha McBride, NAB
Lynn Claudy, Vice President, NAB
David Donovan, President, MSTV
Bruce Franca, Vice President, MSTV

NTIA Attendees: Meredith Baker
Jim Wasilewski
Bernadette McGuire-Rivera
Eric Stark
Milton Brown

The outside attendees were advised about *ex parte* guidelines and told that we would primarily be listening to their briefing and that we would summarize the meeting as part of the record. They were also told to file their written comments in the formal proceeding.

NAB and MSTV provided a briefing on the following issues:

- 1.) Converter Box Standards. The converter boxes subject to the rulemaking should not include the early generation chips. There is no economic incentive for manufacturers to produce converter boxes that actually work if there is no guidance within the technical specifications. The rules should establish a minimum technical floor that requires chips that will ensure that converter boxes work. The specifications of the converter box could be based on MSTV's technical specs.
- 2.) Electronic Programming Guide (EPG). Converter boxes should include an EPG because consumers are use to guiding their way through programming. EPGs are part of the signal that broadcasters send out so including it as part of the converter box would be consistent with the Act. There are two types of EPGs: (1) GEMSTAR (may cost more) and (2) Broadcast PSIP. No preference from MSTV or NAB as to the type of EPG.
- 3.) Energy Standards. Federal guidance is needed with respect to the energy standards for the box. In fact, federal preemption may be necessary. NAB and MSTV do not support the California approach. MSTV promised to provide data on the costs associated with the California approach
- 4.) Smart Antennas. Manufacturers should be permitted to include a smart antenna with the converter boxes. Neither the standards nor the coupon program rules should preclude manufacturers from providing smart antennas as part of the converter box purchase.