



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON
January 16, 2009

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Robert M. McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner McDowell,

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's ability to handle consumer calls related to the digital television transition. I share your concern that the Commission, along with industry, should be doing everything possible to minimize consumer confusion about the transition. I write to discuss some of the actions the Commission has taken toward that end.

At the outset, it is important to note that, while Congress approved the Commission's \$20 million request for the Commission's DTV outreach in October 2008, the Commission only received authority to spend that money this past December 15. Moreover, as you recall, the entire Commission was consulted and approved the \$20 million DTV budget request.

First, the Commission has already taken steps to maximize its call center capability. Specifically, the Commission now has in place more than 150 call center staff. The Commission has also invested more than \$1 million in equipment and software upgrades for the Commission's call center.

In addition, the Commission put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for call center support on December 24. Since that time, we have announced awards for call center and outreach contracts. On January 6 the Commission announced grassroots outreach contract selections worth up to \$8.4 million. And today we announced a contract award for the call center worth up to \$12 million to increase our current call handling capacity.

Today's award will allow the Commission to handle up to two million agent-assisted calls during the week of the DTV transition, including up to 400,000 agent-assisted calls the day after the transition. I understand that both the National Association of Broadcasters and cable operators plan to offer call centers for customer service questions. With a well coordinated public-private partnership I anticipate that together we will have enough capacity to handle the anticipated number of consumer calls about the transition.

You also ask about the contracting process for our call center effort. Specifically, you say "I wonder whether last week's FCC News Release announcing various contract awards completes the Commission's efforts." As I stated above, we released the RFP for call center support on December 24, just days after being authorized to spend \$20 million for DTV outreach. This was a public RFP, and the request was actually available on our website when you wrote your letter. I have attached a copy of the RFP to make it easier

for you to find and review. Again, today we announced a contract award for the call center worth up to \$12 million.

While we have done a great deal of work up to now, I agree that the final weeks before the transition date will be critical. I encourage the Commission and industry to continue their cooperation and maintain their momentum moving toward a successful transition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin J. Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin J. Martin