

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: In the Matter of Carriage of Digital Television Broadcast Signals: Amendment to Part 76 of the Commission's Rules; Implementation of the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act of 1999: Local Broadcast Signal Carriage Issues and Retransmission Consent Issues; WHDT-DT, Channel 59, Stuart, Florida, Application for Review, CSR-5978-M, Second Report and Order, and Memorandum Opinion and Order

Last fall, the Commission adopted an order that guarantees that all cable customers will be able to watch all broadcast stations after the digital transition. Specifically, the Commission took action to ensure cable operators continue to make signals of all broadcast stations viewable after the transition, as the statute requires. As a result, we significantly reduced the number of Americans potentially needing a converter box to watch broadcast stations post-transition. Thus, the Commission made sure the 34 million households that subscribe to analog cable will be able to continue to watch broadcast television after the transition as they did the day before. This allowed the Commission to focus its energies on assisting the over 14 million households that rely exclusively on over-the-air signals.

Today, the Commission adopts an order that will enable satellite subscribers to receive digital broadcast signals, as well. The Act requires that when a satellite operator chooses to carry any local broadcast signal, it must carry all full power local broadcast signals in that same market. The item adopted today clarifies that, in such a "local-into-local" market, where a full power television station is broadcasting only in digital the satellite operator must carry that digital signal upon request. This clarification is critical to ensuring that satellite customers, like cable customers, will continue to receive the same broadcast stations they saw the day before the transition on the day after the transition. We also require satellite carriers to carry each station in the market on the same terms, including carriage of HD signals in HD format if any broadcaster in the same market is carried in HD.

We continue to strive for regulatory parity in our policymaking. In this case, as it was last fall in the cable context, the American consumer is, and continues to be, our highest priority. Without the proper policies in place, some viewers may be left in the dark or be unable to realize the full opportunities offered by digital technology. The Commission remains committed to taking whatever actions are necessary to minimize the potential burden the digital transition could impose on consumers and maximize their ability to benefit from it.