

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY**

Re: Requirements for Digital Television Receiving Capability, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, ET Docket No. 05-24 (adopted June 9, 2005)

Congress's decision to mandate the digital television transition requires the Commission to take an unusually direct role in overseeing the manufacturing and sale of television receivers. Having embarked on this important transition — which will deliver high-value broadcasting services to consumers, enable exciting new broadband applications to be developed, and provide more spectrum for public safety uses — we cannot take any steps backward. Rather, we need to push the transition to its conclusion as expeditiously as possible.

I am therefore pleased that this Order declines to delay the date by which manufacturers must incorporate digital tuners in television sets with screen sizes of 25-36 inches. While I am sympathetic to the claims that requiring only 50% compliance will cause some unanticipated problems in the marketplace, the proposed delay simply would exact too great a cost on the overall progress of the DTV transition. Yet I applaud the Consumer Electronics Association and Consumer Electronics Retailers Association for ultimately recognizing the independent value of accelerating the end point of this transition, independent of the delay they sought on the front end. With these stakeholders' support, this Order makes important progress by ensuring that all sets in the relevant size range will have digital tuners by March 2006, rather than the original deadline of July 2006.

I also support the issuance of a further notice seeking comment on the acceleration of the remaining phases of the tuner mandate. By establishing a record on such changes, the Commission will be better equipped to work with Congress on the rapid completion of the DTV transition and the many consumer benefits it entails.