

Proposal for Voluntary Industry Actions to Speed the Digital Television Transition*

1. Top four broadcast networks (i.e., ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC), HBO, and Showtime:

Provide high-definition or other “value-added DTV programming” during at least 50% of their prime-time schedule, beginning with the 2002-03 season. Value-added DTV programming could be high-definition, innovative multicasting, interactive, etc. – so long as it gives consumers something significantly different than what they currently receive in analog. This would include something more than a single stream of standard-definition digital programming.

2. Broadcast Licensees:

By January 1, 2003, or as soon thereafter as they commence broadcasting, DTV affiliates of the top four networks in markets 1-100 will obtain and install the equipment necessary to pass through network DTV without degradation of signal quality (e.g., pass through HD programming, if that is what its network provides).

Stations broadcasting DTV programming will inform viewers of their digital content through on-air promotional announcements over their analog broadcast facilities.

3. Cable:

By January 1, 2003, cable systems with 750 MHz or higher channel capacity will:

Offer to carry, at no cost, the signals of up to five broadcast or other digital programming services that are providing value-added digital programming during at least 50% of their prime-time schedule.

Provide cable subscribers the option of leasing or purchasing a single set-top box that allows for the display of high definition programming. These devices will include digital connectors (e.g., 1394/5C and/or DVI/HDCP) at the request of the consumer.

Market the digital television products the operator provides, including on their systems and in monthly bills, so that consumers know what programming is available and how they can receive it over the cable plant.

4. Direct Broadcast Satellite:

By January 1, 2003, carry the signals of up to five digital programming services that are providing value-added digital programming during at least 50% of their prime-time schedule.

* Nothing contained in this Proposal for Voluntary Industry Action is intended to prejudge any issue in pending or future Commission proceedings.

5. Equipment Manufacturers and Retailers:

Commit to meeting the demand for cable set-top boxes that allow for the display of high definition programming.

Market broadcast, cable and satellite DTV options at point-of-sale.

Include over-the-air DTV tuners in new broadcast television receivers according to the following schedule:

Sets 36" and above – 50% of units to have DTV tuners by January 1, 2004; 100% by January 1, 2005;

Sets 25"–35" – 50% of units to have DTV tuners by January 1, 2005; 100% by January 1, 2006;

Sets 13"-24" – 100% of units to have DTV tuners by December 31, 2006.

Include digital input(s) (e.g., 1394/5C and/or DVI/HDCP) on all new HD-capable television receivers and display devices by January 1, 2004.