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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6115**

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October 21, 2008

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AND CHIEF COUNSEL

The Honorable Meredith A. Baker  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Ms. Baker:

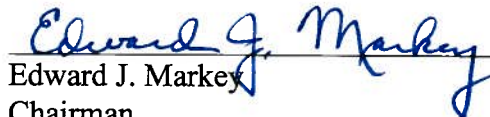
We write with respect to the digital television (DTV) transition. We again thank you for your recent testimony before the Committee and look forward to working with you in the months ahead on ensuring a successful transition.

To better gauge the work of your agency in preparing for the transition, and to better understand aspects of your recent testimony, we respectfully request answers to the attached questions. Please submit your responses to us by **October 31, 2008**.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John D. Dingell  
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward J. Markey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Telecommunications  
and the Internet

The Honorable Meredith A. Baker  
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**Attachment**

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Cliff Stearns, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet

## Attachment

Post-hearing Questions for the Honorable Meredith A. Baker  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)  
U.S. Department of Commerce

1. In your testimony, you noted that television (TV) converter box coupons are portable and can be used by anyone, regardless of the name that appears on the coupon. Therefore, you suggested that consumers who have seen their coupons expire after 90 days who still wish to purchase a converter box could ask their friends or neighbors to apply for coupons on their behalf.

Do you support non-profit organizations—such as public broadcasting stations or community groups—asking members of their organizations or other concerned individuals to apply and obtain coupons and then donate their coupons or converter boxes purchased with those coupons so that these resources may be distributed to consumers:

- a. Who are needy or hard-to-reach?
  - b. Whose coupons have been lost in the mail?
  - c. Who live in multiple-dwelling units without individual addresses?
  - d. Whose coupons expired after 90 days?
2. You stated in your testimony that you expected the TV Converter Box Coupon Program to have approximately \$340 million in unspent funds at the end of the program. If that is the case, do you support repealing or waiving the rule NTIA adopted—which was not part of the statute that Congress enacted—that limits the number of coupons available to households with cable or satellite service?
  3. Do you expect to have \$340 million in unspent funds because the amount remaining reflects the expected demand? If you expect that amount of left-over money because you are predicting demand will be low, please respond to the specific points raised to us in an October 6, 2008, letter by Federal Communications Commission Chairman Kevin Martin, who stated that he was “concerned that the total funding required to satisfy consumer demand may prove to be insufficient.”
  4. Do you expect consumers in households that subscribe to cable or satellite service to be turned away when they apply for coupons because there are not sufficient funds to accommodate their requests? If so, on what date do you think this will occur, and how many consumers do you estimate will be denied coupons?
  5. Do you anticipate that any households that subscribe to cable or satellite service might need to be placed on a waiting list until coupons that have been sent to other cable and satellite homes have expired? If so, on what date do you think NTIA will need to create a waiting list, and how many households do you estimate will end up on the waiting list?

Post-hearing Questions for the Honorable Meredith A. Baker

6. If money for converter box coupons for households that subscribe to cable or satellite service runs out, does this mean that NTIA will no longer expect that the TV Converter Box Coupon Program will have unspent funds at the end of the program?
7. If money for converter box coupons for households that subscribe to cable or satellite service appears to be running out, will NTIA act to waive or rescind the rule it adopted—which was not part of the statute that Congress enacted—that limits the number of coupons available to households with cable or satellite service?
8. If money for converter box coupons for households that subscribe to cable or satellite service runs out, will you encourage such households to ask family members or neighbors in over-the-air-only households to apply for converter box coupons on their behalf? Please explain how your answer is consistent or inconsistent with your testimony before the Subcommittee that consumers who have seen their coupons expire after 90 days who still wish to purchase a converter box could ask their friends or neighbors to apply for coupons on their behalf.
9. If a household that subscribes to cable or satellite service is applying for a converter box coupon for a neighbor who relies on over-the-air reception whose coupon has expired or was lost in the mail, will that application be treated differently from an application from a resident of a household that subscribes to cable or satellite service who is applying for the coupon for herself? If not, if the money for converter box coupons for households that subscribe to cable or satellite service runs out, how will residents of cable or satellite homes be able to apply for coupons for friends or neighbors in over-the-air-only homes whose coupons have expired or were lost in the mail?
10. Based upon the experience with the DTV transition test in Wilmington, North Carolina, and data coming in from calls from consumers in that market, how many coupons do you estimate were lost in the mail during that switchover?
11. How many coupons does NTIA estimate, by percentage, are being lost in the mail nationally?