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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
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Washington, DC 20515-6115

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July 7, 2008

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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 Assistant Secretary Baker:

On February 12, 2008, 21 members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce wrote urging you to allow households whose TV converter box coupons have expired to apply to have them reissued, provided there are sufficient funds remaining in the program to support such reissuance.

In your response of February 21, 2008, you expressed NTIA's awareness "that the financial assistance provided by the Coupon Program will have a critical role in the ultimate success of the digital television (DTV) transition." You also stated, "NTIA will have a better understanding of the impact of the 90-day expiration and the demands on Coupon Program funds as consumers begin to redeem coupons in the coming months."

TV converter box coupons began expiring last month, and to date the redemption rate has been below 50 percent. In the meantime, we have become aware of the need for many households to obtain boxes with the analog pass-through feature to allow them to receive the digital signals of full-power stations and the analog signals of low-power and translator stations. Analog pass-through boxes, however, are not yet widely available, which means that many households whose coupons are about to expire have no choice but to purchase boxes without analog pass-through. If those households were able to apply to have their coupons reissued, many would choose to do so in order to be able to use their coupons for analog pass-through boxes.

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There are less than 230 days remaining before the end of the DTV transition. If the transition is not successful, millions of Americans that rely solely on over-the-air broadcasts may be left in the dark. We therefore again strongly urge you to act expeditiously to allow households whose coupons have expired to apply to have them reissued.

Sincerely,



John D. Dingell
Chairman



Edward J. Markey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Telecommunications
and the Internet

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

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