

**Statement
Of**

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FCC En Banc Hearing

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Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the Commission's efforts surrounding call center support for the upcoming DTV transition. With the passage of the DTV Delay Act, the Commission was afforded the opportunity to address specific enhancements to its approach for call center operations. These enhancements focused on increasing the flexibility of agent staffing, fostering inter-agency integration, managing language support, and increasing consumer responsiveness.

The FCC's call center operations consist of two primary components: agents supported locally within the FCC's DC and Gettysburg facilities and agents supported in a network of contracted facilities across the country. Throughout the DTV transition efforts, we have maintained a core pool of FCC-based agents to address a constant demand of consumer DTV inquiries. For both the February transition event and the upcoming June transition event, we have augmented that in-house capacity with a cadre of contract agents. For the June event, we have designed a flexible contract that allows the FCC to respond as necessary to unpredictable call volumes. This flexibility allows the FCC to respond by adjusting agent staffing levels as call demand varies. We have developed a two-tier agent pool that allows the Commission to efficiently address consumer inquiries with appropriately trained agents. We are increasing the agent workforce to 4000 agents. 3000 agents will be trained to address inquiries at the Tier 1 level; 1000 will be trained at the Tier 2 level. These agents will be trained and available by June 10.

During the past few months, we have further improved our call center integration with our partner agency's call center operations. For the February transition event,

compressed time horizons only permitted development of a one-way interconnection between the FCC and the NTIA. That is, when consumers contacted the 1-888-CALL FCC number they were provided an option to directly transfer to the NTIA's automated coupon ordering system. We have now expanded this interconnection so that consumers also have the opportunity to transfer directly to one of the FCC's agents from the NTIA's 1-888-DTV 2009 number. Since this change was put in place, we have seen, at times, over 2400 consumers per day opting to speak to an agent.

One critical capability we sought to enhance for the June transition was an increase in our capacity to address multiple languages. In February, the Commission principally supported English- and Spanish-language calls, with only limited resources to address additional languages. For the June transition, we will continue to support English and Spanish language through contracted agents at a ratio of 70% English agents and 30% bilingual Spanish/English agents. In addition to this capability, agents have the ability to conduct three-party calls with a translation service. This increases our language support to more than 100 languages.

We have also taken concrete steps to improve our responsiveness to consumers. One particular area of focus has been agent skill level and knowledge. During the February transition event, we only had sufficient time to train agents for 24 hours; the DTV Delay Act provided us with enough time to train our agent pool more extensively. By analyzing both the training received by agents hosted within FCC facilities and the DTV material, we have developed both 40-hour and 80-hour training programs tailored to the agents' required skill level. This increased training better prepares the agents to answer the consumer's questions efficiently and effectively. The breadth of consumers'

potential DTV inquiries demonstrates that some consumer interactions can quickly migrate to very technical discussions. Our training curriculum addresses the most likely inquiry scenarios; however, the curriculum also trains agents in a diagnostic methodology, so that agents can walk consumers through specific steps to address their questions.

Consumers are also able to take advantage of the wealth of DTV information available on a revamped DTV.gov website. The website allows consumers to access the information developed to guide our agents, as well as information that the Commission has organized to educate and assist the public on available resources. Users of the website are also able to access information describing the nature of our consumer inquiries and how this information has trended over time.

In addition to preparing a more trained agent workforce, we are in the process of simplifying the consumer's experience within the Commission's call center menu options. We made an initial effort in February to speed the consumer to a live agent; we will shortly make changes to further improve this aspect of the consumer's experience. For example, with our current menu options, a consumer takes approximately 1 minute and 20 seconds to reach an agent. The new menu system will move the consumer to a live agent in approximately 30 seconds.

The items discussed here are only a few of the enhancements we have put in place as we prepare ourselves for the transition on June 12. Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.