Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	**MB Docket No. 03-15**
Second Periodic Review of the Commission's	)	**MM Docket No. 99-360**
Rules and Policies Affecting the Conversion	)	**MM Docket No. 00-167**
To Digital Television	)	**MM Docket No. 00-168**

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF WATCHTV, INC.

1. WatchTV, Inc. ("WatchTV") hereby submits these Comments in response to the Commisison's *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* in the above-captioned proceedings, FCC 03-8, released January 27, 2003. These Comments address the digital television transition and not public interest or children's television obligations of digital broadcasters and urge that the Commission take steps to facilitate timely and innovative digital operation by Class A and Low Power Television ("LPTV") station.

2. WatchTV operates 18 Class A and LPTV stations in the States of Oregon and Washington. Many of these stations formerly operated on Channels 52-69. All have been successfully transitioned to in-core channels (Channels 2-59). However, the facilities of these stations in some cases fall short of what is needed to serve their audience because of protection requirements for full power digital stations.

3. Many of the WatchTV stations provide Univision network programming to their viewers, a growing Hispanic population that for the most part has no other Spanish language programming available. WatchTV is ready, willing, and able to expand services to this population to the extent it is able to do so consistent with the

Commission's protection requirements. The sooner that the full power digital landscape is firmed up, the sooner that WatchTV will be able to go to work on expanding its coverage. Thus WatchTV urges the Commission not to unduly delay decisions by full power stations regarding channel selection, replication, and maximization. While it may be harsh, if not impractical, to require every full power station to make its final decisions immediately, the need for orderly decision-making does not necessarily translate into long delay or the need to leave spectrum unused while a full power station makes long-range decisions. The spectrum that full power stations actually use should be protected; but operators like WatchTV, who are programming for underserved audiences, are ready, and should be permitted, to use fallow spectrum sooner rather than later.

4. WatchTV also urges the Commission to move ahead promptly with its proposed rule making proceeding addressing the transition to digital operation for Class A and LPTV stations. WatchTV is anxious to begin working in the digital environment, to study and learn more about its benefits and limitations. It has equipment on hand that can easily be modified for digital operation and plans in the near future to request an experimental license to study the digital prospects for its stations. There will be an opportunity in the new rule making to address the details of digital migration for Class A and LPTV stations; but preliminarily, it does not appear that an early flash cut to digital operation on a station's analog channel will be practical, because that approach would be too risky for a station's ongoing business operation and so would discourage early digital implementation.

5. Finally, WatchTV urges the Commission to provide for distributed transmission technologies for digital television. Class A and LPTV stations must deal

with problems that their full power counterparts do not face in terms of reaching even the viewers in their protected service area, because their power is limited, so they cannot use "brute force" power to overcome propagation obstacles. Multiple strategically placed transmitters offer the prospect of overcoming some signal penetration problems, and the technology necessary to avoid interference between multiple transmitters broadcasting the same signal is advancing rapidly. The Commission approved distributed technology, subject to not extending a station's authorized total coverage area, in *Implementation of LPTV Digital Data Pilot Project*, 16 FCC Rcd 9734 (2001). For the same reasons that distributed technology was recognized as useful, if not vital, in that proceeding, it should be recognized as a viable technology for digital video broadcasting.[1]

6. In sum, WatchTV urges the Commission to move the decision-making process for permanent full power digital facililities along in a timely manner, to provide promptly for digital operation by Class A and LPTV stations, and to authorize distributed transmission technology subject to reasonable interference protection standards.

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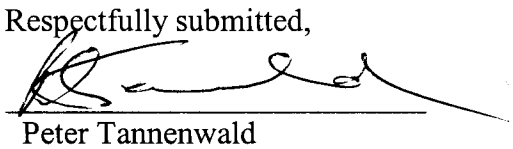
Respectfully submitted,



Peter Tannenwald

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[1] The idea of authorizing multiple transmitters, coupled with either confining the overall system's signal to a specified limit at the boundaries of its service area or successful coordination with the adjacent area licensee, is commonplace in other services where the Commission has auctioned spectrum on a geographic area basis.