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February 26, 2004

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W., TW-A325  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**RE: Children's Television Obligations of Digital Television Broadcaster, MM Docket No. 00-167; Second Periodic Review of the Commission's Rules and Policies Affecting the Conversion To Digital Television, MB Docket No. 03-15, RM 9832; Digital Carriage Rules, CS Docket No. 98-120**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to section 1.1206 (b)(2) of the Commission's rules, we hereby submit this notice regarding an *ex parte* meeting in the above-referenced proceedings.

On Wednesday, February 25, 2004, representatives of the Children's Media Policy Coalition met with staff members of the Media Bureau, including Bureau Chief W. Kenneth Ferree and Associate Bureau Chief, Digital Television Task Force, Rick C. Chessen. Attending the meeting were Patti Miller, director of the Children and the Media Program at Children Now; Gloria Tristani, Children Now board member; Dr. Dale Kunkel, Department of Communications at the University of California Santa Barbara; and James A. Bachtell, staff attorney at the Institute for Public Representation at Georgetown University Law Center.

Members of the Children's Media Policy Coalition urged the Commission to adopt public interest guidelines to ensure that children's educational and informational needs are met. Noting that the public interest proceeding had been pending for some time, the Coalition urged the FCC not to put the economic interests of the broadcasters ahead of the interests of children.

The Coalition summarized the proposals made in the Coalition's comments. First, they urged the Commission to adopt programming guidelines for broadcasters that reflect the technical capabilities and increased channel capacity of digital television. The Coalition recommended that any increase in multicasting channel capacity that broadcasters choose to implement should translate into a commensurate increase in the amount of programming available to children.

Coalition members supported the idea of a channel dedicated to children's programming, so long as it contained a substantial amount of E/I programming.

Second, coalition members noted that digital technology could be used to better help parents find E/I programming and avoid programming inappropriate for children. With digital technology, onscreen links could give parents detailed information about the nature of the programming. The V-Chip could be adapted and used not only as a filter but an indicator of programming that is beneficial for children.

Finally, Coalition members noted that the existing children's advertising policy needs to be updated for digital broadcasting. The current separation policy dividing children's programming from advertising should be adapted to take account of interactive capabilities. The Commission should clarify that direct links from children's programming violate the advertising limits and separation policies. There should be a clear separation between programming and advertising that would prevent children from clicking on an advertisement directly from a program. Dr. Kunkel said this is particularly important in light of just-released research by the American Psychological Association showing that children under 8 are unable to critically comprehend televised advertising messages and are prone to accept advertising messages as truthful, accurate and unbiased.

Yours truly,

James A. Bachtell