Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	MB Docket No. 03-15
Second Periodic Review of the	)	
Commission's Rules and Policies	)	
Affecting the Conversion	)	
To Digital Television	)	

To: The Commission

JOINT FILING IN SUPPORT OF
MSTV'S PROPOSAL FOR THE DTV CHANNEL ELECTION AND REPACKING PROCESS

Barrington Broadcasting Corporation, Chelsey Broadcasting Company, Dispatch Printing Company, Draper Holdings Business Trust, Midwest Television, Inc., Post-Newsweek Stations, Inc., and Raycom Media, Inc. (collectively, the "Joint Broadcasters") present this pleading to express their strong support for the DTV channel election and repacking process proposed by the Association for Maximum Service Television ("MSTV") in its submission dated May 6, 2004. In filing together, the Joint Broadcasters hope to demonstrate to the Commission the wide range of support that the MSTV plan has among the broadcast industry. The Joint Broadcasters represent 52 stations across the country, ranging from the smallest markets to the largest markets, including stations in some of the most congested markets, and representing stations with both out-of-core and low VHF channels.

Individually, these stations must grapple with different issues presented by the DTV transition. The Joint Broadcasters therefore recognize that conflicts will inevitably arise in any channel election and repacking process. But a process that is fair and transparent will minimize the number of conflicts and facilitate the resolution of the few conflicts that do arise.

The Joint Broadcasters find common ground in supporting the MSTV proposal precisely because its approach is fair and transparent and retains the flexibility to resolve conflicts and take into consideration the relative equities before putting forward a new DTV Table of Allotments, thereby providing for an orderly transition.

The channel election and repacking process is one of the most important and complex DTV transitional issues facing the Commission and the broadcast television industry. The process must occur within the physical limitations of spectrum, assure the ability of stations to protect their replicated or maximized service areas and, thereby, optimize service to the public, and balance the substantial investments already made by stations in building out their digital facilities. It also must consider other potentially complicating factors, ranging from database correction to the resolution of Canadian and Mexican coordination issues and low VHF interference issues.

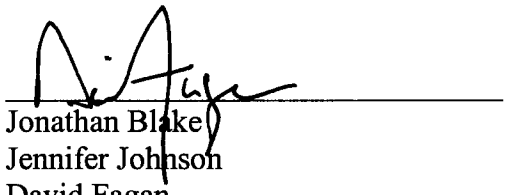
Accordingly, it is imperative that the Commission and industry work together to support a channel election and repacking plan that will facilitate stations' ability to make informed choices and assure that the maximum digital television service is provided to the public. The cornerstones of this plan must be transparency, order, and fairness. Over the last year, MSTV engaged in a thorough study of the complexities presented by channel election and repacking, soliciting input from stations across the industry to develop and achieve consensus on a detailed five-step plan that contains each of these cornerstones. Because the MSTV plan is orderly and transparent, it will enable stations to make informed selections and to plan and make appropriate investments for their ultimate facilities. It also will achieve the most expeditious transition possible by gaining stations' understanding and acceptance of their ultimate channel

assignments. Ultimately, the educated selections made by stations and the certainty of the results will secure the most important goal of the transition — optimizing service provided to the public.

Equally important to what the channel election process should be is what, in no uncertain terms, it must not be — namely, a "black box" where all the stations simply throw in their applications simultaneously with the Commission spitting out the results in the form of a final DTV table of allotments. Such a single-filing process would eviscerate any meaningful choice exercised by stations, and would force stations to make investments in DTV facilities on a partially or entirely blind basis. Stations with two out-of-core channels would be particularly disadvantaged; without any information on what channel would be available, these stations would effectively be forced to play the lottery in making their channel election application. Further, given the lack of transparency and fairness in a single-filing channel election and repacking process and the fact that such a process would be adopted in the face of industry support for the alternative approach presented by MSTV, a single-filing process would surely be subject to numerous challenges, leading to a lengthy reconsideration that will delay the transition. In short, a single-filing plan can only lead to a chaotic transition that falls far short of all parties' ultimate objective: maximizing the digital service provided to the public.

The Joint Broadcasters strongly urge the Commission to avoid the disastrous results that would flow from a "black-box" approach to channel election and repacking and, instead, to adopt the fair, transparent, and orderly plan submitted by MSTV and supported by the industry.

Respectfully Submitted,



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