



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Information Officer

Washington, D.C. 20230

FEB 26 2008

Ms. Susan E. Dudley
Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Dudley:

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requests expedited review of an information collection request, "NTIA Message Testing Focus Groups and Interviews for the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box."

Congress directed NTIA to create and implement a program to provide coupons for consumers to purchase digital-to-analog converter boxes. (*See* Title III of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-171, 120 Stat. 4, 21 (Feb. 8, 2006)). These converter boxes are necessary for consumers who wish to continue receiving broadcast programming over the air using analog-only television sets after February 17, 2009 - - the date that television stations were required by law to cease analog broadcasting. On March 15, 2007, NTIA published a Final Rule establishing the parameters of the Coupon Program and describing the rights and responsibilities of interested parties. In accordance with the Act, and its own regulations, NTIA began accepting applications from consumers for these coupons on January 1, 2008.

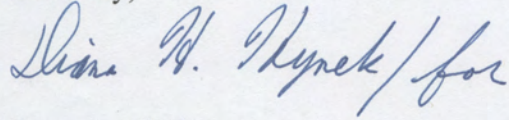
In addition, since September 2007, NTIA has been conducting a consumer education campaign to educate U.S. residents who receive over-the-air broadcasts on analog television sets about the digital television transition and the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. The education campaign was built around a transition date of February 17, 2009. On February 11, 2009, the President signed the DTV Delay Act into law changing the date by which all full-power television stations must cease analog broadcasts to June 12, 2009. With the delay, additional consumer outreach must be conducted to educate U.S. consumers who have yet to prepare for the analog to digital transition and encourage them to take action.

While awareness of the coupon program has been reported at well over 90 percent by numerous sources, more than five million households were completely unprepared as of February 2009 based on Nielsen data. In an effort to help identify the unprepared households, and ascertain if the households have taken any steps to prepare for the transition, and if not, why not, NTIA is proposing to conduct focus groups. NTIA would like to conduct focus groups and a limited number of individual interviews to guide the development of new messages and materials to reach these consumers. These focus groups will help identify the optimal messages and methods to communicate with those consumers who are not ready in the final months leading up to the transition.

This emergency review is necessary so that the focus groups and interviews may commence as soon as possible. Once they are concluded, an application will be developed and submitted to OMB for approval. These steps are necessary to enable consumers to apply for converter box coupons by the statutory mandated date of July 31, 2009. If focus groups are not used to collect this information, the consumer education campaign, as well as the application process, may further deter consumers. As a result, households that rely solely on over-the-air broadcasts may not apply for coupons, and thereby lose access to television after June 12, 2009. NTIA is requesting OMB approval by March 6, 2009.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Hilding" followed by a stylized flourish.

Suzanne Hilding