



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Information Officer

Washington, D.C. 20230

May 13, 2009

Mr. Kevin Neyland
Acting Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Neyland:

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) requests expedited review of an information collection request entitled, "DTV Texting Campaign." 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 (February 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 June 12, 2009 which is the new date that television stations are required by law to cease analog broadcasting.

As of March 29, 2009, Nielsen indicated that 3.4 percent (approximately 3.9 million of the 114.5 million U.S. homes) were completely unready for the digital switch. While this number is relatively small, several demographic groups are unready at a rate significantly higher than the national average. For example, 6.3 percent of TV homes where the head of the household is under 35 years of age are unready. Additionally, 6.2 percent of African-American TV homes and 5.6 percent of Hispanic TV homes are unprepared.

According to MRI 2008 Doublebase, 61 percent of all U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 34 have a cell phone or a personal digital assistant (PDA) with text message capabilities, and 40 percent have used that feature within the past 30 days. Among NTIA's two primary target populations, there is high usage with 50 percent of Hispanic and 54 percent of African-American consumers age 18-34 having a device with text message capabilities. Thirty-two percent of Hispanic Americans and 34 percent of African Americans have used this feature in past 30 days.

As part of the Coupon Program's final efforts to reach target audiences, a text messaging campaign will be deployed. A texting campaign will help to increase the impact on NTIA's target audience by engaging them via SMS (short message service) text. It will also increase the number of interactions NTIA has with its target audience and extend the reach of the program's educational efforts by generating word of mouth engagement from the identified audiences.

This is how the campaign will operate: In targeted communities, NTIA will advertise a code where consumers can send a text message in order to receive information about preparing for digital television (DTV). Consumers who send a text message will receive, via text message, the Web site address and phone number needed to apply for a converter box coupon.

Through initial discussions with the OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, it was determined that an information collection approval was necessary to implement the texting campaign. Given that the DTV transition must take place in approximately thirty days, NTIA is requesting approval of this collection by **May 14, 2009**. NTIA has determined that this consumer education campaign is a necessary step to minimize the number of American consumers that lose television service after June 12, 2009.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Hilding for". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Suzanne Hilding