

REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO

HDTV TAPING (11/14/96) FOR

MSTV'S TENTH ANNUAL ATV UPDATE

It is a great pleasure for me to speak to you via this historic taping in High Definition Television. How appropriate for me to be able to participate once again in MSTV's ATV conference via the very technology that we seek to bring to the American public!

The FCC is approaching the culmination of one of the most important proceedings in its history. As the only current Commissioner who was present at the creation -- the creation of the ATV proceeding -- I want to take a few moments to reflect on why we launched this proceeding and why it is so critical that the FCC move quickly to complete it by adopting the DTV standard and assigning the ATV channels.

I am proud to have played a key role in causing the Commission to vote to preserve the UHF spectrum for HDTV and to launch our advanced television proceeding nearly ten years ago. The FCC foresaw that our free and universal NTSC television broadcast system soon would require a technical upgrade to survive in competition with emerging pay media. The technology we would need did not yet exist -- Japan and Europe were exploring analog HDTV technologies for satellite distribution which were too spectrum-hungry for terrestrial use. So we created an all-industry Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Service and charged it with developing an advanced television technology and standard to meet the unique needs of our U.S. community-based broadcast system.

Through the marvels of free enterprise competition and the tremendous efforts of Advisory Committee Chairman Dick Wiley and his army of industry volunteers, a state-of-the art Grand Alliance digital broadcast system was developed which formed the basis for the ATSC digital standard recommended unanimously by the Advisory Committee a year ago next week.

It is time for the FCC to follow through on the recommendation of its own Advisory Committee and the Commission's ten-year commitment to the American public. If discussions among broadcasters and other industries result in consensus as to some modification of that standard, I'm all for it. But the fact is that the standard already is flexible enough to accommodate improvements after it is adopted.

The technology is ready -- as we are demonstrating here today. It's time to bring it to the American public as quickly as possible -- and that requires our expeditious adoption of the ATSC DTV standards.

I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person today but am delighted to join you through this taping at WHD-TV -- the model HDTV station sponsored by broadcasters and consumer equipment manufacturers. I want to take this opportunity to thank MSTV for its leadership and intensive efforts on behalf of the transition of our free and universal broadcast system into the new century. And I wish all of you a most informative and productive conference.

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