

April 21, 1981

Concurring Statement of FCC Commissioner James H. Quello

In re: Direct Broadcast Satellite Services

I concur with the Commission action today accepting Comsat's innovative interim DBS application on a developmental basis and also issuing a comprehensive rulemaking on DBS that provides all parties an opportunity to present their views. The Commission action today encourages prompt development of direct-to-home satellite TV and provides an interesting and significant opportunity to study and evaluate a satellite-transmitted pay service.

However, we must preserve future options in regulation, development and structuring to assure a continuing universal local broadcast service to communities throughout the nation. I believe local service to the public was intended and is implied by the Communications Act. We must be careful not to restructure the entire broadcast system to favor pay services over a free service to the public.

I doubt that overall public interest will be served by any radical change that threatens or reduces the ability of broadcasters to support a wide range of local news, entertainment and public and emergency services fostering the well-being and progress of our communities. The same concerns apply to national and international news, emergency services and public affairs programming provided by existing network service free of any direct cost to viewers or listeners.

We must carefully develop a record to establish to what extent DBS will eventually be regulated as a common carrier, a broadcast service or a private radio service.

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