

April 5, 1996

Separate Statement
of
Commissioner James H. Quello

Re: **Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for
Fiscal Year 1996**, MD Docket No. 96 -

While I support the issuance of this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, I have a concern in one specific area on which I am particularly interested in seeking comment. I am perplexed by the proposed increase in the regulatory fee for cable operators from \$0.49 to \$0.50 per subscriber per year. While this increase is, on its face, minimal, I question the need for any increase in a fee for a service that will be increasingly deregulated over the next three years. Given the large and growing number of cable subscribers, this one cent increase will generate substantial revenue. If not so, why would we propose it? Moreover, because cable operators collect these fees directly from subscribers and remit them to the Commission, we should ensure that they reflect the level of regulation -- and, thus, the indirect benefit to subscribers -- of our statutory oversight the cable industry. I am well aware that the Commission must collect a certain amount in assessed fees, and therefore, if not from cable operators, then an additional sum must be collected from some other related industry. Nevertheless, I want to ensure, to the extent possible, that the fee schedule reflects the degree of regulation in each industry. Accordingly, I ask that commenters, in general, frame all their comments in this regard and, in particular, focus on the proposed increase in cable subscriber fees in light of the accelerating trend toward deregulation.