

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN ON DTV TEST
MARKET – PRESS CONFERENCE
May 8, 2008**

I'm pleased that broadcasters, businesses and elected representatives – especially Congressman McIntyre and Mayor Saffo – have volunteered their beautiful city of Wilmington, North Carolina, to be the first U.S. city to cease analog broadcasting and go all digital on September 8th – exactly four months from today. I want to thank the outstanding leadership of my colleague, Commissioner Cops, for pressing this excellent idea forward, and Chairman Martin for helping to make it happen.

The Commission has acted on several helpful suggestions made by me, Commissioner Cops and Members of Congress. With my urging, the Commission has resurrected our internal DTV task force that was misguidedly dismantled two years ago and is now permitting Commission staff – the real experts – to take more of a proactive role in reaching out to communities across the country. With prodding from Congress, the Commission has developed consumer education requirements for broadcasters and others in private industry.

Some would say that the City of Wilmington is quite brave for volunteering to be the test market of an uncoordinated DTV transition process. But the truth is that by completing their transition to digital TV five months before the deadline for the rest of the nation, Wilmington is providing itself and the entire country with a great service.

As somebody who's played in rock bands, I know that every good band rehearses and gets it right before it goes on the main stage. In this rehearsal, I hope the FCC will coordinate with not only *local* broadcasters, but also with *local* cable operators, DBS operators, state and local governments, *local* community groups, and *local* consumer electronic retailers. Significant *local* involvement supported by the federal government is critical to a successful transition.

Equally important is the Commission's coordination with the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) to make sure that sufficient converter boxes with and without analog pass-through capability are available, that coupons are delivered in time to Wilmington households, and that direct technical assistance is available to senior citizens and other vulnerable populations.

Such level of coordination will truly be unprecedented and, I hope, will give the Commission a wake-up call of how daunting of a task lies ahead before February 17, 2009. In light of the considerable time and resources the Commission will dedicate to Wilmington, we must address the difficult question of whether we have a similar or comparable plan for the rest of America.

Do we have a coordinated plan? Have we allocated our resources to target the priority or high-risk markets in a comprehensive manner? Are we going to be assigning full-time staff from the Media and Public Safety Bureaus to Wilmington, and if so, will we do so for every other community in America? Will we study what makes Wilmington unique, and not misapply

lessons learned there to, say, more mountainous regions? If the answer to these questions is “no,” the real question becomes whether this is a truly representative test case, or just a staged dress rehearsal under false conditions.

If we put massive resources into making this succeed, all out of proportion to what we do elsewhere, will we gain a false sense of complacency? I sure hope not.

Ad hoc efforts are not a substitute for a thoughtful, coordinated plan. Every community in America deserves nothing less than what we will put into Wilmington. A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Perhaps today will be the beginning of the Commission developing a coordinated plan for all media markets in America.