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Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, D. C. 20554

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON CABLE-CONSUMER ELECTRONICS AGREEMENT ON “PLUG AND PLAY”

Washington, D.C. - Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took another step forward in the transition to digital television. Today's proceeding seeks comment on proposed rules for “plug and play” cable compatibility, which is a key piece of the digital television puzzle. In a “plug and play” world, consumers will be able to plug their cable directly into their digital TV set without the need of a set-top box.

On December 19, 2002, the cable and consumer electronics industries filed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which details an agreement on a cable compatibility standard for an integrated, one-way digital cable television receiver, as well as other unidirectional digital cable products. The industries assert that unidirectional digital cable television receivers manufactured pursuant to the MOU would be capable of receiving analog basic, digital basic and digital premium cable television programming by direct connection to a cable system providing digital programming. Due to the unidirectional nature of this receiver specification, an external navigation device will still be needed to receive advanced features such as cable operator-enhanced electronic programming guides, impulse pay per view or video on demand. The MOU indicates that the industries continue to work on a bidirectional receiver specification that would eliminate the need for an external navigation device to receive advanced services.

When the industry agreement was reached, FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell said, “Plug and play will be good for the future of these industries, good for the digital transition, and most importantly, good for consumers.”

Today's *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)* seeks comment on the MOU and the proposed FCC rules contained therein, as well as its potential impact upon consumers, small cable operators and multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) other than cable operators. The *FNPRM* also seeks comment on the jurisdictional basis for FCC action in this area, including the creation of encoding rules for audiovisual content provided by MVPDs. As to issues not addressed by the MOU, such as the down-resolution of programming, the *FNPRM* seeks comment on whether FCC action is needed and authorized.

Action by the Commission, January 7, 2003, by Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 03-3).

-FCC-

Comments due: March 28, 2003
Reply Comments due: April 28, 2003
CS Docket 97-80
PP Docket 00-67

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