

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Annual Assessment of the Status of Competition in the Market for the Delivery of Video Programming*, Notice of Inquiry (MB Docket No. 06-189)

We all want the market for video programming to be competitive. Not for the sake of competition, but because competition is the surest road for bringing real benefits to consumers. When they have more options, consumers reap big rewards—better services, higher technology and, very importantly, lower prices.

There is enormous potential for increased competition in the video programming market. We are seeing large investments from existing participants in the marketplace and also from telephone company entrants and others that are expanding their efforts to deliver video programming. We are seeing new technologies that have the potential to utterly transform the viewing experience. Getting these new products and services out to all Americans is going to be a challenge, however, so we need to be working toward the kind of competition that leaves no area behind, whether it's the inner city or the rural farm. We should also work to ensure that competition expands consumer options. While consumers have access to more channels than ever before, it does not follow that they have the power to reject objectionable programming or keep at bay rates that are rising at 2-½ times the rate of inflation. Different interests cite different reasons for these problems, but we owe it to consumers and to Congress to get to the bottom of these questions in the Report that will follow from today's Notice of Inquiry.

If we are going to continue to improve these Reports, we need the submission of detailed comments from the widest possible range of sources. Our analysis can be only as good as the data going into it. If the record that develops falls short in any way, the Commission must then rely upon other public data to round out the picture of competition in the video programming marketplace. My preferred method would entail, in addition to the submitted comments and public data, intensive and proactive Commission information-gathering to obtain independent and verified data. Such an effort would help ensure the accuracy of our findings and help us to fulfill Congress' directive.

So thanks to the Bureau for its work in teeing this up and my hope is that this thirteenth Report will be the charm.