



# NEWS

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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. Circ 1974).

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## **Press Statement by FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin on Orders Resolving Various Set-Top Box Waiver Requests**

Today the Media Bureau (Bureau) has resolved various set-top box waiver requests, furthering both pro-competition and pro-consumer policies. By these orders we are once again taking action to further Congress's goal of creating a competitive market for the set-top boxes that are used for watching cable television. In 1996, Congress explained: "Competition in the manufacturing and distribution of consumer devices has always led to innovation, lower prices and higher quality." I agree.

A previous Commission required cable operators to separate their security functions putting them into a CableCARD, which can be used in televisions and set-top boxes made by other manufacturers. By separating out security functions, the Commission hoped a viable market for truly cable ready televisions and set-top boxes could flourish. Back then, Congress and the Commission envisioned consumers being able to walk into their local retail store and buy televisions and set-top boxes from any manufacturer that would work on any cable system. This is a goal that I share and believe we are a big step closer to with today's rulings. In a new era with a competitive set-top box market, consumers will enjoy greater choice and reap the benefits of exciting and innovative features – such as the ability to watch Internet videos or view slideshows of family vacations on their tv sets.

The Bureau's actions today implement the statutory requirements to facilitate a competitive market for set-top boxes in a reasonable and consistent manner. Specifically, the Bureau granted a waiver of the integration ban for MVPDs that either are currently all digital or going all digital by February 17, 2009. In addition, the Bureau deferred enforcement of the July 1st deadline for one cable operator who demonstrated that it has placed orders for set-top boxes that comply but that its orders will not be fulfilled in time for it to comply with the deadline. The Bureau also denied the National Cable & Telecommunications Association's request for a waiver of the integration ban for all cable operators. Finally, the Bureau denied the broad waiver requests of several cable operators but provided several ways they could amend their requests.

The two-way rulemaking that the Commission began today will further spur the creation of a competitive set-top box market. I look forward to seeing greater progress between the cable industry and the consumer electronics industry on developing a two-way standard that would ensure that subscribers who do not wish to rely on set-top boxes provided by their cable operators can access two-way, as well as one-way, cable services.

