

TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON
15TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS



AGRICULTURE

GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES
AND RISK MANAGEMENT
HORTICULTURE AND ORGANIC
AGRICULTURE

**TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
RAILROADS, PIPELINES, AND
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC
BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1315

- REPLY TO:
WASHINGTON OFFICE:
- 1207 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2371
 - DISTRICT OFFICES:
 - 2004 FOX DRIVE
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820
(217) 403-4690
 - 202 NORTH PROSPECT ROAD
SUITE 203
BLOOMINGTON, IL 61704
(309) 663-7049
 - 655 WEST LINCOLN
UNIT 8
CHARLESTON, IL 61920
(217) 348-6759
 - 1001 MARKET STREET
SUITE 102
MOUNT CARMEL, IL 62863
(618) 262-8719

MB
Must carry
PV
JG
2137

Dec. 4, 2009

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I am writing on behalf of the citizens of Illinois, thousands of whom may be profoundly impacted by the outcome of negotiations between Mediacom Communications Corporation and Sinclair Broadcasting Group over retransmission consent rights for broadcast stations serving our state.

As you may be aware, failure to reach a related compromise in early 2007 resulted in 700,000 Mediacom customers in 12 states losing access to 22 broadcast television stations controlled by Sinclair. During the four week impasse, the nearly two million people residing in those households were unable to view many of their favorite network programs, NFL playoff games, the BCS National Championship Game, college basketball games and local news and weather reports.

During the last dispute between Mediacom and Sinclair, many of our constituents were able to utilize rabbit ear antennas to pick up the analog over-the-air broadcasts of the Sinclair stations. As a result of the Digital TV Transition earlier this year, these Sinclair stations now only broadcast in a digital format. Many of our citizens, particularly the elderly and low-income populations, rely on Mediacom to convert Sinclair's digital broadcast signals to analog so they can continue using their older analog only televisions.

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Given the expense of upgrading to a digital television or purchasing a digital to analog converter, it is unlikely that receiving the Sinclair stations over-the-air would be a realistic option for many of the impacted households this time around.

Our citizens have come to depend on these stations for news and entertainment. On behalf of our constituents, the customers of Mediacom and the viewers of the Sinclair stations, we write to you today asking that FCC do everything in its power to ensure that a disruption in service does not occur again. In the event that Mediacom and Sinclair are unable to come to terms on a retransmission consent agreement, we request that, above all else, the FCC take action to protect the public interest.

At a minimum, the FCC should authorize interim carriage of the stations while the parties sort out their differences before the Commission. In the alternative, the FCC should consider ordering that the parties submit to binding arbitration if no arms length agreement can be reached.

The interests of the public must come first. To that end, we believe it is imperative that the FCC use its authority to prevent any interruption in broadcast service during this round of negotiations between the parties.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy V. Johnson", written over the typed name and title.

Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress