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January 21, 2011

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Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I would like to offer the following comments to the Federal Communications Commission as it begins work on a report regarding in-state broadcasts as required under Section 304 of the Satellite Television and Localism Act of 2010. As you know two counties in Colorado, La Plata and Montezuma, are 'orphan counties' and are unable to obtain in-state broadcasts. This unfair anomaly is a major concern to my constituents in Southwest Colorado who argue persuasively that they should have the same basic ability to see broadcasts from their own state as every other county in Colorado. I strongly support their view and am committed to working to secure them access to the television broadcasts that relate to the news, politics, sports and emergency notifications of their own state.

This situation has attracted strong support from the State of Colorado. In both 2008 and 2010 the State Legislature of Colorado passed resolutions urging the federal government, including the FCC, to take action to address this situation. The resolution concludes that this situation leaves the citizens of Southwest Colorado "disenfranchised in that they find themselves much better informed about the laws, issues, and candidates of New Mexico than they are about the laws, issues, and candidates of Colorado." I could not agree more. To most interested parties this issue appears easily solvable. However the current system of Designated Market Areas does not have the required flexibility to address problems such as this. The failure of Washington, D.C. to find a pragmatic solution perplexes my constituents and offers many of them proof that Washington is simply broken.

Thankfully this report, as requested by Congress, offers the FCC an opportunity to put forth a common sense solution on how to address this problem. I therefore strongly urge the FCC to use this report as the first crucial step to fix this longstanding problem. Thank you for your attention to this request and I look forward to working with your Commission to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator