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For Immediate Release**FCC ENHANCES ACCESSIBILITY OF VIDEO PROGRAMMING ON TELEVISION*****By Updating the Rules to Allocate Captioning Responsibilities, Resolution of Captioning Issues Will Become More Efficient and Effective***

WASHINGTON, February 18, 2016 – The Federal Communications Commission today adopted amendments to its rules on closed captioning of televised video programming to ensure that millions of Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing have full access to programming. This action helps clarify which entities are responsible for which parts of the delivery and quality of closed captions on television.

The order clarifies that responsibility for the quality of closed captioning falls on video programmers that prepare or make arrangements for the captions on their television shows, while the delivery and technical aspects of captioning remains the responsibility of distributors (such as cable or satellite companies). The Commission allocates the responsibilities for addressing and resolving closed captioning provision and quality control issues between video programmers and distributors, based on which entity has primary control for each issue. The Order also modifies and improves the captioning complaint procedures and certification process.

With today's action, the agency continues to place primary responsibility for the provision of closed captions on video programming distributors (VPDs), the entities that distribute these programs, including cable and satellite providers, as well as broadcast stations licensed by the Commission that distribute directly to the home. Furthermore, prior to passing a complaint on to programmers a VPD must certify that it has exercised due diligence in determining that it is not responsible for the captioning issue. However, given the role of video programmers in creating programs, contracting with captioning vendors, and delivering programs to VPDs, the order amends the rules to extend some of the responsibility for ensuring the quality of closed captioning to video programmers, which generally includes broadcast and non-broadcast TV networks that provide programs for distribution to residential households. The action also holds programmers responsible for a lack of captions where they have failed to provide captions on non-exempt programs.

To effectively implement the new rules, the amended rules simplify the FCC's certification processes. Requirements for multiple certifications are replaced with a single annual filing requirement by video programmers that asserts compliance with FCC rules governing the provision and quality of captions. Certifications must also specify exemptions from the rules claimed by any programmer.

The Order revises the captioning complaint procedures to reflect the shared responsibilities of both distributors and programmers for receiving, serving and resolving television closed captioning complaints. The Commission also established a “compliance ladder” to encourage companies to swiftly resolve reported problems through corrective actions that make enforcement action by the Commission unnecessary.

For more information about closed captioning of televised video programming, visit:
<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/closed-captioning>.

Action by the Commission February 18, 2016, by Second Report and Order (FCC 16-17). Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, and Rosenworcel approving. Commissioner Pai approving in part and concurring in part. Commissioner O’Rielly approving in part and dissenting in part. Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, Pai and O’Rielly issuing statements.

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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. Cir. 1974).