

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. MCDOWELL**

*Re: Third Periodic Review of the Commission's Rules and Policies Affecting the Conversion to Digital Television.*

Today's Order provides a progress report on the digital transition, establishes deadlines and procedures to ensure that the February 17, 2009 transition date is met and offers regulatory flexibility to broadcasters to facilitate their construction of digital facilities by the deadline. The specifics set forth in the Order regarding when stations may and must cease analog operations, when they may and must begin operating on their post-transition digital channel, and what regulatory flexibility they have, will help ensure that the complicated, coordinated switch to DTV becomes a reality.

Of course, the broadcasters and the Commission still have a tremendous amount of work to do before February 17, 2009. The transition is an extremely complex undertaking that presents many challenges to the industry and to us as regulators. Many broadcasters will want more flexibility than we grant them in this Order. However, we have attempted to balance carefully their need for flexibility and certainty with the Commission's obligation to oversee the transition for the benefit of over-the-air viewers.

I thank and congratulate the Media Bureau staff for their tireless work on this Order.