

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Cable Carriage of Digital Television Broadcast Signals (CS Docket No. 98-120)

Pursuant to Sections 614 and 615 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, cable operators are required to make the signals of local television stations that are subject to mandatory carriage “viewable on all television receivers of a subscriber” and provide such signals “without material degradation.” The interplay of these two statutory provisions raises a number of difficult, but important, questions concerning how cable subscribers will view “must-carry” television signals after the digital transition, now set by Congress to occur on February 17, 2009. At that point, broadcasters will transmit in digital format only, but many cable systems still will have a significant number of subscribers who receive only analog cable service. I believe that the item asks the right questions concerning how cable operators can abide by their statutory obligations until they have completed their own transition to fully digital operations, so that consumers remain able to receive news, information, entertainment, and even emergency alerts.