

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL**

RE: Implementation of Short-term Analog Flash and Emergency Readiness Act; Establishment of DTV Transition “Analog Nightlight” Program, MB Docket No. 08-255

I am pleased to support this order implementing the Short-term Analog Flash and Emergency Readiness (“SAFER”) Act. We all hope that the content of the limited analog “nightlight” broadcasts authorized in this item will significantly assist those TV viewers who rely solely on rabbit-ear or rooftop antennas with soon-to-be-outmoded analog sets to obtain television service after the digital transition. I want to commend commenters who submitted very helpful suggestions in response to the *Notice* under an extremely tight time frame.

I hope to see the nightlight stations provide their local audiences with specific and detailed “how to” information on obtaining converter boxes, re-positioning antennas, scanning (or rescanning) for channels, and how they can obtain further one-on-one assistance. I also look forward to working with the industry to rapidly finalize plans for phone banks that will provide viewers with helpful information in the most direct and accessible manner possible. As I have said before, I grow increasingly concerned about the Commission’s ability to handle what will be a crush of phone calls in the coming days and weeks regarding the transition.

As I have said before, although we are striving to smooth the way for the DTV transition, it is likely to be messy – whenever it occurs – for those who, by choice or circumstance, must depend on converter boxes to keep TV service in their homes. For example, even consumers who already have installed converter boxes will need to ensure that their devices rescan (or “auto-tune”) to ensure that they receive all stations broadcasting digitally in the area. This rescanning will need to be done the day after the digital transition, and again at the end of the nightlight period, to account for stations that may change channel numbers.

I continue to encourage everyone to join government and industry to help those most at risk of being left behind when the change comes: the elderly, the disabled, low-income individuals, and non-English speakers. People should not wait until the last second to help themselves and their neighbors, friends, and family get ready for DTV. Delay only deprives viewers of the better pictures and sound – as well as additional, free over-the-air program channels – that DTV already is making available today.