

Sinclair Files Comments at FCC in Digital TV Proceeding

HUNT VALLEY, Md., May 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: SBGI) ("SBG") today filed comments at the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") as part of the biennial review of the digital television ("DTV") rollout. The review is to address several DTV issues, although the debate over the DTV modulation system is expected to be the primary focus of most comments filed. Sinclair has led an industry-wide movement to adopt COFDM (coded orthogonal frequency division multiplexing) as a secondary modulation system alongside that of the currently adopted 8-VSB (8-level vestigial sideband).

"Iron-clad evidence continues to mount illustrating that the current 8-VSB standard has failed to serve the broadcast industry," stated David D. Smith, CEO of Sinclair. Since the FCC dismissed Sinclair's Petition for Expedited Rulemaking on February 4, 2000, various groups and organizations that were ardent supporters of 8-VSB have either expressed dissatisfaction with or have questioned the performance of 8-VSB. Among them are GE/NBC, MSTV and Argentina, which recently indicated its intention to rescind its 1998 adoption of the 8-VSB standard. Smith noted, "There has been a tidal shift of broadcasters' expectations in the direction of requiring reception on simple indoor antennas as well as in the portable environment consistent with today's analog service."

Sinclair's DTV comments state that "broadcasters are unable to provide ease of reception or ubiquitous, reliable over-the-air service to viewers using simple antennas in broadcasters' core business areas." The comments further stated that "this reality remains a compelling reason for the Commission to abandon its exclusive reliance on the 8-VSB standard." The comments also noted that "miracle chips" that were promised last summer have not yet materialized and that the chip vendors who made those promises are now admitting that acceptable improvements are years away. The Sinclair filing cautioned the FCC from being unduly influenced by "hypothetical and mathematical analysis and data from controlled laboratory tests" and that the FCC "should toughen its standard of proof on the ATSC 8-VSB modulation issue and demand nothing less than hard data on 8-VSB real-world performance." Smith also commented, "Certain chip manufacturers should be ashamed of themselves for making the unfounded statements they continue to make to the FCC and the broadcast industry. They no longer have any credibility."

In its filing, Sinclair implored that the FCC "should be focusing on the steps necessary to ensure that broadcasters' signals are receivable in their core business areas under typical, consumer-grade viewing conditions." Moreover, the Sinclair filing noted that continued reliance on 8-VSB as the sole standard will only further empower the telecommunications gatekeepers to discriminate against broadcasters. "Sinclair and others have proved that the COFDM modulation system provides a robust and ubiquitous signal that has raised the benchmark for over-the-air reception," stated Nat Ostroff, VP for New Technology. "The cable companies will think twice before employing anti-competitive tactics if they know consumers can easily receive TV signals with simple antennas."

Sinclair has led the entire broadcast industry in testing the real-world performance of the 8-VSB system since Sinclair first noted reception flaws two years ago. It was several weeks of widely-attended side-by-side tests of the 8-VSB and COFDM systems conducted by Sinclair in Baltimore in 1999 that raised industry awareness of the 8-VSB shortfalls in reception. The results of similar testing conducted by NBC, the Department of Defense and Brazilian authorities mirrored Sinclair's findings.

"This is no longer a technical issue, but is a political one," stated Mark E. Hyman, VP of Corporate Relations. "Everyone now knows that sole reliance on 8-VSB is completely unacceptable. The question now is how long will it take to provide the industry with the DTV modulation system it needs to be

competitive by today's standard, let alone tomorrow's?"

Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. is a diversified broadcasting company that owns or programs 61 television stations in 40 markets and 6 radio stations in one market. Sinclair's television group reaches approximately 25% of U.S. television households and includes ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, WB, and UPN affiliates. Sinclair, through its wholly owned subsidiary, Sinclair Ventures, Inc., owns equity interests in Internet companies including BeautyBuys.com, Inc., an e-tailer of brand name health and beauty products; NetFanatics, Inc., an e-business solutions and applications provider; and Synergy Brands, Inc., an incubator of on-line consumer product companies. Other strategic investments of Sinclair Broadcast Group include Acrodyne Communications, Inc., a leading manufacturer of transmitters and other television broadcast equipment.

SOURCE Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc.

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