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February 2, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman and Representative Barton:

On behalf of AARP, I write in support of S. 352, the "DTV Delay Act," to address the problems confronting our nation's conversion from analog to digital television broadcasting by delaying the conversion date to June 12, 2009. AARP is concerned that many of our most vulnerable citizens could lose television service if the DTV transition proceeds as planned on February 17th. Clearly the date of the transition is not as important as making sure that we get this transition right for all consumers.

While AARP has worked diligently to build awareness about the transition among our 40 million members and the public generally, millions of households remain unprepared for the transition. The government program to help defray part of the cost of purchasing analog signal converter boxes has suspended issuing new coupons and now has a waiting list of nearly 3.5 million requests. Even with additional funding, it is doubtful the program will be able to deliver coupons to all households requesting assistance prior to the cut-off date.

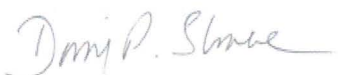
Efforts to target converter box coupons to the nation's estimated 14 million households with analog-only televisions have been inadequate. While more than 6 million self-described analog-only households have requested and received coupons, recent reports indicate that at least 6.5 million households are still not ready for the transition.

In addition, government funding to provide community outreach and hands-on assistance for the vulnerable elderly, low income, rural, disabled, and non-English speaking households has come very late in the process, making it difficult to provide these important communities with assistance in obtaining and

installing converter boxes. Finally, our most vulnerable elderly depend on broadcast television for public safety information and cannot afford to lose access to these important reports.

For all these reasons AARP supports S. 352, the "DTV Delay Act," and urges Congress to act swiftly to approve this needed legislation.

Sincerely,



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