SILVESTRE REYES
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIR AND LAND FORCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2433 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4831
FAX: (202) 225-2016

DISTRICT OFFICE:
310 NORTH MESA, SUITE 400
EL PASO, TX 79901
(915) 534-4400
FAX: (915) 534-7426

http://www.house.gov/reyes/

January 13, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Boucher
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Telecommunications and
the Internet
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Waxman and Boucher:

I am writing to express my strong support for a delay in the Digital Television (DTV) transition set to occur on February 17, 2009. I was pleased to learn that President-elect Obama has urged Congress to postpone the February 17th implementation date, and it is my hope that you will consider alternatives that will ensure that families and individuals are not left behind.

As you know, I am particularly concerned with this issue given the unique DTV transition challenges that exists in my congressional district and along the U.S.-Mexico border. Households along the U.S.-Mexico border already have low rates of cable or satellite television subscription. However, unlike other parts of the country, televisions in the border region will continue to work after the February transition, as viewers in the U.S.-Mexico border will maintain analog transmissions from Mexico. This presents a major obstacle for those trying to prepare analog-only viewers for this transition because many of these Spanish-speaking viewers will have little incentive to purchase the required digital converter box once they discover their television still works.

In addition, I am very concerned about the unfolding circumstances surrounding the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) implementation of the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. Specifically, I am troubled by recent reports on the NTIA's creation of a wait list after issuing the maximum amount of coupons allowed under its budget. These developments raise serious questions as to the actual ability of many households to comply with the February deadline.

Again, I urge you to postpone the February 17th deadline and consider alternatives that will place communities on track to make this important transition. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER