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Congress of the United States
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October 9, 2007

The Honorable Kevin Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

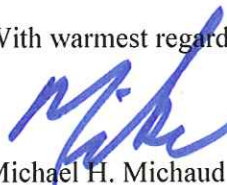
I am writing to urge caution regarding proposals currently before the Federal Communications Commission to allow unlicensed personal and portable devices to operate on unused portions of the television spectrum. Interference from these devices has the potential to undermine over-the-air television in the United States, and in particular to distort digital signals. I strongly urge the Commission to engage in further testing before opening the television spectrum to these devices.

As you know, even a small amount of interference freezes a digital picture, making it unwatchable and potentially impacting reception on recently purchased digital television sets and government subsidized digital-to-analog converter boxes. Nearly 21 million homes – one in five of all television-equipped households – rely exclusively on free, over-the-air television broadcasts. For these households, interference could be devastating.

Preliminary FCC studies show that digital television sets could be subject to interference from tested devices in 80% to 87% of a television station's coverage area. Moreover, the FCC's most recent report, released July 31, 2007, found that one of just a handful of tested devices failed to "sense" the presence of TV signals and could cause interference. These testing results are troubling, and certainly indicate the need for additional and more comprehensive testing.

I fully support efforts to deliver the promise of broadband to rural America. In my district, high speed internet access is vital to economic development, increasing citizen access to government services, and providing new educational resources to schools and other institutions. I encourage the deployment of technologies that utilize "unused" spectrum through fixed systems and look forward to the development of technologies that can offer broadband to rural consumers without threatening viewers who rely on over-the-air television.

With warmest regards,



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

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CC:

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The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein

The Honorable Deborah Taylor Tate

The Honorable Robert M. McDowell

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