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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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COMMISSIONER CHAIRMAN COMMISSIONER

December 23, 2009

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**RE: Written Ex Parte Communications concerning comments sought on
Video Device Innovation: GN Docket Nos. 09-47, 09-51, 09-137; CS Docket
No. 97-80; NBP Public Notice #27.**

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As a member of the Michigan Public Service Commission, I appreciate the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) efforts to seek comment on how the commission can encourage innovation in the market for video devices that will be an essential element in the development of a National Broadband plan. We believe that it is important that the needs and concerns of Speech Impaired, Deaf, Deafblind, and Hearing Impaired individuals be considered in the development of any National Broadband plan.

In January 2008 the Michigan Telecommunications Relay Center Advisory Board submitted its report to the Governor and Legislature on the ability for deaf, hard of hearing, and speech-impaired customers to access telecommunications services. Based on the findings in this report it is estimated that in Michigan there are approximately 90,000 deaf, 800,000 hard of hearing, and 100,000 speech impaired residents that could benefit from access to emerging technologies such as Video Assisted Speech-to-Speech and Video Relay Service (VRS) which is a camera and broadband based service.

In addition to incorporating the special needs of the Speech, Hearing, and Visually impaired community from a technological standpoint, it is also important to address their ability to obtain these new devices and services at an affordable cost. In the report cited above it determined that affordability is a significant impediment to these individuals gaining access to these new technologies. Therefore, we encourage the FCC to consider making services such as Video Assisted Speech-to-Speech a reimbursable part of VRS and included in the National Broadband plan.

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Once again, I would like to thank the FCC for providing the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Monica Martinez
Commissioner