

Minister of Industry



Ministre de l'Industrie

Allan Rock

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H5

OCT 17 2002

Mr. Glenn O'Farrell
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Association of Broadcasters
306 - 350 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5S2

Dear Mr. O'Farrell:

Thank you for your letter of July 16, 2002, expressing the concerns of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) regarding the roll-out of digital television (DTV) related to Industry Canada's plans to liberate a modest amount of spectrum for public safety on the frequency band 746-806 MHz (Television Channels 60-69). I regret the delay in responding.

First, let me state that Industry Canada remains steadfastly committed to the successful transition of DTV in Canada. The department has sustained this commitment since the inception of DTV over a decade ago. It has involved our full participation in the Task Force on Digital Television, the development of international technical standards, the negotiation of a Canada/U.S. spectrum-sharing agreement and, perhaps most significantly, the development on the DTV Transition Allotment Plan. As you correctly indicated in your letter, it is an allotment plan that provides each existing broadcaster with an additional channel on which parallel DTV services can be provided.

I am pleased with the release of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's DTV licensing framework, as this now provides broadcasters with the regulatory environment to proceed with the DTV roll-out. It is also yet another example of the broad-based support for the transition to DTV in Canada.

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Canada is faced with meeting the critical need for spectrum with a view to public safety and national security, following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We now have an increased national responsibility along the Canada/U.S. border to safeguard our citizens and ensure that the trade flow between our two countries is maintained. These measures require spectrum for effective interoperable communications among public safety services on a cross-border and domestic basis. In order to meet these needs and align our spectrum use, Industry Canada is undertaking spectrum-sharing studies.

The purpose of these studies is to determine how much spectrum could be made available for public safety in television channel pairs 63/64 and 68/69 in the near term. The studies will determine how this could be accomplished with vacant channels and with minimal adjustment to the allotment plan. Of course, each existing broadcaster will continue to have an additional channel on which parallel DTV services can be provided.

I urge you and the members of the CAB to continue your dialogue with Industry Canada officials. Together, we can arrive at a solution for public safety and national security that will not compromise DTV broadcasting.

I trust that this information is helpful to the CAB and please extend my regards to your members and my continued support for the transition to digital television in Canada.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan Rock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Allan" and last name "Rock" clearly distinguishable.

Allan Rock

c.c. The Honourable Sheila Copps, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage