



Don't Let TV Station Moves Leave Viewers and Listeners in the Dark

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The issue:

Congress should pass the Viewer and Listener Protection Act and fully fund the Broadcaster Relocation Fund to ensure their constituents do not lose access to local stations when they are required to move to new frequencies in the coming year.

Here's why:

By law, nearly 1,000 local stations across the country are moving to new channel frequencies due to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) broadcast spectrum incentive auction. This auction reallocated broadcast airwaves for wireless broadband services. This impacts your constituents who watch their local channels over the air with an antenna – 77 million Americans nationwide. These viewers will need to rescan their TV sets at the appropriate times to continue watching TV for free.

Congress assured TV broadcasters that they would not be penalized if they chose not to participate in the spectrum auction. To that end, Congress authorized a \$1.75 billion relocation fund to cover the costs necessary to move stations to new frequencies to make room for wireless carriers after the auction. These moves are likely to cost significantly more and take much longer than envisioned by Congress. Costs are currently estimated to exceed the fund by hundreds of millions of dollars. The FCC also imposed an arbitrary 39-month deadline by which local TV stations must complete their moves or go off the air, which could leave your constituents without access to critical information.

This timeline is problematic because there are few crews qualified to modify broadcast towers, antennas and transmission lines and a shortage of antennas available for purchase. Further complicating this process, many radio stations that share towers with moving TV stations must go off the air for a period of time while the work is completed, jeopardizing listeners' access to these stations.

Your constituents should not lose access to emergency information local broadcast stations provide due to arbitrary and unachievable deadlines set by the FCC, nor should stations be left to foot the bill for hundreds of millions of dollars simply because the Commission could not adhere to its congressionally-set budget. Recently, the House Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously approved legislation, H.R. 4986 (RAY BAUM's Act), which establishes accounts to cover these shortfalls. Additionally, bipartisan legislation, S. 1632 (The Viewer and Listener Protection Act), introduced by Sens. Jerry Moran (KS) and Brian Schatz (HI) is pending in the Senate Commerce Committee to do the same. Broadcasters strongly support these legislative efforts and urge immediate appropriations action to fully fund the Broadcaster Relocation Fund and ensure stations are held harmless as the FCC moves forward with the repacking process.

For more information and to see how your state and district will be impacted, visit nab.org/TVStationMoves.