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Designated Market Areas:
How They Relate to Viewers and a Vital Local Television Marketplace
White Paper Highlights

- Local stations serve their communities with local news, weather and sports, coverage of community affairs and events, public service announcements, and other important local information, including *vital emergency and disaster relief information*.

- Revenue from the sale of advertising time supports these important and costly local broadcast services.

- Designated Market Areas (DMAs) were defined to support, nurture and make efficient the buying and selling of advertising time on local stations.

    - There are 210 DMAs (local TV markets) in the U.S., annually reviewed to assure accurate representation of viewer patterns.

    - DMAs are groups of counties. The Metro, or core of the DMA, consists of counties with one or more large population centers and the TV stations that serve them. Non-Metro counties are assigned to a DMA based on viewers' station preferences using statistically accepted procedures.

    - DMAs can cross state lines when there is a high degree of economic and social integration between counties in two (or more) states. For example, the Chicago DMA contains counties in Illinois and also Indiana.

        - Viewers living in Lake County, Indiana, located on the shore of Lake Michigan, are better served by stations in the Chicago DMA (truly local news, weather and emergency information) than by stations in the distant, Indianapolis DMA.

- Allowing cable and satellite companies serving a DMA to import non-local station signals will:

    - Diminish a station's ability to deliver quality, locally-oriented programming and reinvest in its community
    - Result in viewers losing access to local news, emergency information, weather alerts and other local interest programming on TV
    - Interfere with program exclusivity arrangements freely negotiated between broadcasters and program suppliers and would run counter to Congress' and the FCC's localism goals
    - Disrupt advertising sales