

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
Hearing on “Satellite Video 101”  
February 13, 2013**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

In a tradition we've been observing every five years or so for a quarter century, today we begin discussing the law authorizing satellite video providers to distribute broadcast television signals. It is important we do these period look-backs.

SHVA. SHVIA. SHVERA. STELA. These are acronyms that strike fear into the hearts of many. Some, I'm sure, wish they could turn back like Punxsutawney Phil after seeing his shadow. I prefer to see, as Phil did this year, signs of an early spring.

We have an opportunity with our partners in the Judiciary Committee to examine whether the satellite law is still serving its purpose in a video market that would be unrecognizable to those who worked on the original legislation in 1988. Broadcasting has gone digital. Satellite television is no longer a nascent industry. Phone companies, wired and wireless, are in the video business. Consumers can stream and download their favorite shows over the Internet. Viewers have more choices—and more expectations—than ever before. Companies are trying to keep up: launching new services; embarking on spin-offs, mergers, and partnerships; and experimenting with new business models to meet consumer demand in a new competitive reality. Our laws are also trying to keep up in a world where traditional classifications and the regulations that emanate from them seem increasingly strained.

The goal, of course, is to provide consumers more of what they want while ensuring companies have the investment resources to get it to them. Can we better ensure television viewers have access to the broadcast programming of their choice while respecting the rights of stations that transmit it over the air and the networks that create it? Would finally letting the law expire help that cause? Is it better to reauthorize it as is? Or are revisions called for, either narrow or sweeping? Is there something we can do to address the ongoing frustration viewers have who find themselves assigned to “local markets” outside their states or who live in places that don't have a full complement of network affiliates?

Today we are going to set the table for this discussion by examining the current state of satellite television law. This is perhaps the most arcane and complicated area of law we confront in this subcommittee. That is why I thought it wise to start early, giving us ample time to hear from all parties in advance of the December 31, 2014, sunset that applies to some of the existing provisions. Rest assured, we will have several more hearings, providing additional opportunity to consider not only the satellite issues directly before us, but also affording time to those who would ask us to take this opportunity to revisit other areas of communications law.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. I am particularly pleased to welcome Eloise Gore, associate bureau chief of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau. My understanding is this will be her fourth reauthorization while at the Commission, if we do in fact reauthorize the law. I want to thank her for her willingness to share her expertise. I also want to set some ground rules. Ms. Gore is in a position to share her considerable knowledge on how the law operates and perhaps even on what may be working and what may not be. She will not, however, be making policy recommendations on how the law should change. That is a pleasure reserved for us on this dais and in the Congress, in consultation with our constituents back home and those in the television business who can help us create an environment that entertains, informs, and creates jobs.

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