



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 24, 2014

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concerns about protecting the future of competition in the marketplace for video set top boxes. I appreciate your long-standing leadership on this issue as the original author of Section 629 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and share your desire to ensure that today's consumers can enjoy the benefits of new and innovative ways to access video programming.

The STELA Reauthorization (STELAR) Act that has passed Congress contains provisions that, among other things, sunsets the Commission's existing integration ban rule one year after enactment. It also directs the Commission to establish – within 45 days of enactment – a Working Group made up of “technical experts representing a wide range of stakeholders” that will “identify, report, and recommend performance objectives, technical capabilities, and technical standards of a not unduly burdensome, uniform, and technology-and platform-neutral software based downloadable security system” for the next generation successor regime to the CableCARD. The Working Group is to file a report with the Commission no later than nine months after enactment.

Recognizing the near-term enactment of STELAR, I plan to direct the Commission staff to establish the Working Group as quickly as possible, consistent with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Once established, the Commission will provide assistance to the Working Group to promote as best we can a successful outcome of its collaboration and, upon receiving its report, will assess quickly the best path forward for implementing a new standard.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. I will keep you and your staff apprised of our progress in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler