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United States Senate

December 5, 2016

SUITE SD-255
DIRKSEN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2107
202-224-2742

975 JFK FEDERAL BUILDING
15 NEW SUDBURY STREET
BOSTON, MA 02203
617-565-8519

222 MILLIKEN BOULEVARD, SUITE 312
FALL RIVER, MA 02721
508-677-0523

1550 MAIN STREET, 4TH FLOOR
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101
413-785-4610

Brian L. Roberts
Chairman and CEO of Comcast Corporation
Comcast Center
1701 JFK Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Mr. Roberts,

I write to request information about your plans to ensure that residents in the Boston Designated Market Area continue to have reliable access to NBC's free, over-the-air coverage. Earlier this year, Comcast-NBCUniversal announced its intention to end its affiliation with WHDH and launch an NBC owned and operated station in January of 2017.¹ By ending its affiliation with WHDH, NBC will no longer use WHDH's transmitter to provide free, over-the-air coverage to communities in the Boston Designated Market Area. Instead, NBC will reportedly use a transmitter in New Hampshire and has recently agreed to purchase a low-power television station in Boston, which may be used to boost NBC's signal.²

I am concerned that when NBC launches its network-owned station in January, some communities in Massachusetts and throughout New England may lose reliable access to free, over-the-air NBC content. Seniors, low-income residents, and anyone who has recently ended their pay-TV subscription may be particularly impacted if there is a reduction in coverage. As a longtime supporter of free, over-the-air local broadcasting, I strongly encourage you to ensure that all residents in the Boston Designated Market Area enjoy the same quality and reliability of free, over-the-air NBC content.

As January rapidly approaches, I respectfully request that you answer the following questions:

1. What transmitter(s) will NBC use to provide communities in the Boston Designated Market Area with free, over-the-air coverage in 2017? Will the transmitter(s) be ready to send signals by January 1st, 2017?

¹ Leung, Shirley. "NBC to Drop WHDH, Launch Own Station." The Boston Globe, 7 Jan. 2016. Web. 28 Nov. 2016. <<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2016/01/07/ansin-says-nbc-plans-pull-plug-whdh/4NbOMK7uRADzllXGjvle1N/story.html>>.

² Leung, Shirley. "NBCUniversal Buys Local Station That Could Play Role in NBC Boston." The Boston Globe, 20 Sept. 2016. Web. 28 Nov. 2016. <<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2016/09/19/nbcuniversal-buys-local-station-that-could-play-role-nbc-boston/czuFvRBxmKnoWcmJrPO8CK/story.html>>.

2. How many households in the Boston Designated Market Area currently receive reliable indoor and outdoor antenna coverage from the WHDH transmitter? Please list the number of households receiving indoor and outdoor antenna coverage separately.
3. How many households in the Boston Designated Market Area will receive reliable indoor and outdoor antenna coverage from your transmitter(s) in 2017? Please list the number of households that will receive indoor and outdoor antenna coverage separately.
4. Which communities and parts of communities, if any, will be unable to enjoy the same quality of indoor or outdoor antenna coverage in 2017 as they received with WHDH in 2016? If communities will lose access to free, over-the-air NBC content, how does NBC plan to address this gap in coverage?
5. How is NBC making communities aware of the impending transition to a new network-owned station?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I respectfully request that you provide a written response to my inquiry by December 12, 2016.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator