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Dear Representatives and Senators:

Consumer Action<sup>1</sup> writes to you today about **retransmission rules**. We are pleased that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering a framework for dealing with transmission disputes and preserving the rights of cable consumers to get the programming they pay for and expect to be able to view. But even with an FCC-issued notice for proposed rulemaking underway and lawmakers agreeing that reform is overdue, *there's been little headway in protecting consumers*. The public has been waiting far too long for reform to still be faced with blackout threats and blackouts.

Retransmission fees have caused consumer prices to increase year after year. Consumers must no longer be put in the middle of disputes between programmers and distributors. Consumer Action calls for a fair and just framework for settling retransmission disputes without adverse impact to consumers.

Programmers have not shown good faith. Blackouts or threat of blackouts timed to coincide with program events such as the Academy Awards, the Super Bowl and other key sporting events, are a transparently coercive tactic that causes consumer harm.

Programming should not be compromised for responsible consumers who pay their cable or satellite bills on time. Consumers should not be forced to switch providers because big companies can't get deals done on time.

Consumer Action calls on Congress and the FCC to require continued carriage of broadcast signals during negotiations or disputes, so that consumer programming is uninterrupted. We urge all responsible parties to act quickly to end this adverse effect on consumer rights.

When consumers pay for a service, they have every right to expect that it will be delivered, as expected and uninterrupted.

Sincerely,

Linda Sherry



National Priorities Director

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<sup>1</sup> *Through multilingual financial education materials, community outreach, and issue-focused advocacy, Consumer Action empowers underrepresented consumers nationwide to assert their rights in the marketplace and financially prosper.*