

COMPTEL Welcomes FCC Conversation to Unlock Set Top Box, Free Consumers and Competition

Washington DC (Monday, August 31, 2015) – Today, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler and the FCC opened a public comment period following the publication of the Downloadable Security Technical Advisory Committee (DSTAC) report.

This is the beginning of a process that could lead to an end of forced leasing of cable set top boxes, opening the marketplace for increased video devices competition.

In response, Chip Pickering, CEO of COMPTEL and a member of the Consumer Video Choice Coalition released the following statement:

“Today Chairman Tom Wheeler and the FCC continue to make consumers and competition the centerpiece of their agenda.

“The movement to free customers from the shackles of the cable set top box will open the door to consumer freedom and more competition.

“Decades ago we ended the practice of forcing customers to lease a black rotary dial phone from Ma Bell. This opened new markets for choice and innovation. The archaic practice of forced leasing a set top box from the cable company is a hold over from a by gone era.

“As detailed in the [report](#) from Senator’s Ed Markey and Richard Blumenthal, consumers spend an average of \$231 per year to rent set top boxes—for a total of about \$20 billion annually.

“Today, the [New York Times editorial page](#) echoed these points, stating that ending forced leasing would also improve television viewing.

“The FCC comment period marks the beginning of an effort to bring creative competition to the video device marketplace. In an age where television consumers are cutting the cord and breaking the bundle, unlocking the box is an important step in the evolution of video and competition.”