

June 12, 2009

# DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE

# What is the transition?

- ⦿ Two changes to over-the-air broadcast channels
  - TV signals transmitted at higher frequencies (channels)
  - Content represented in digital format, instead of analog
- ⦿ Federal mandate effective June 12, 2009
  - FCC has regulatory authority over wireless spectrum
  - Over-the-air channels cease “analog” broadcasting
  - Deadline applies to all full-power TV stations
- ⦿ If you have an analog-only TV that is not connected to cable or satellite service, you will need a digital converter box to continue to receive local over-the-air broadcast channels after June 12, 2009

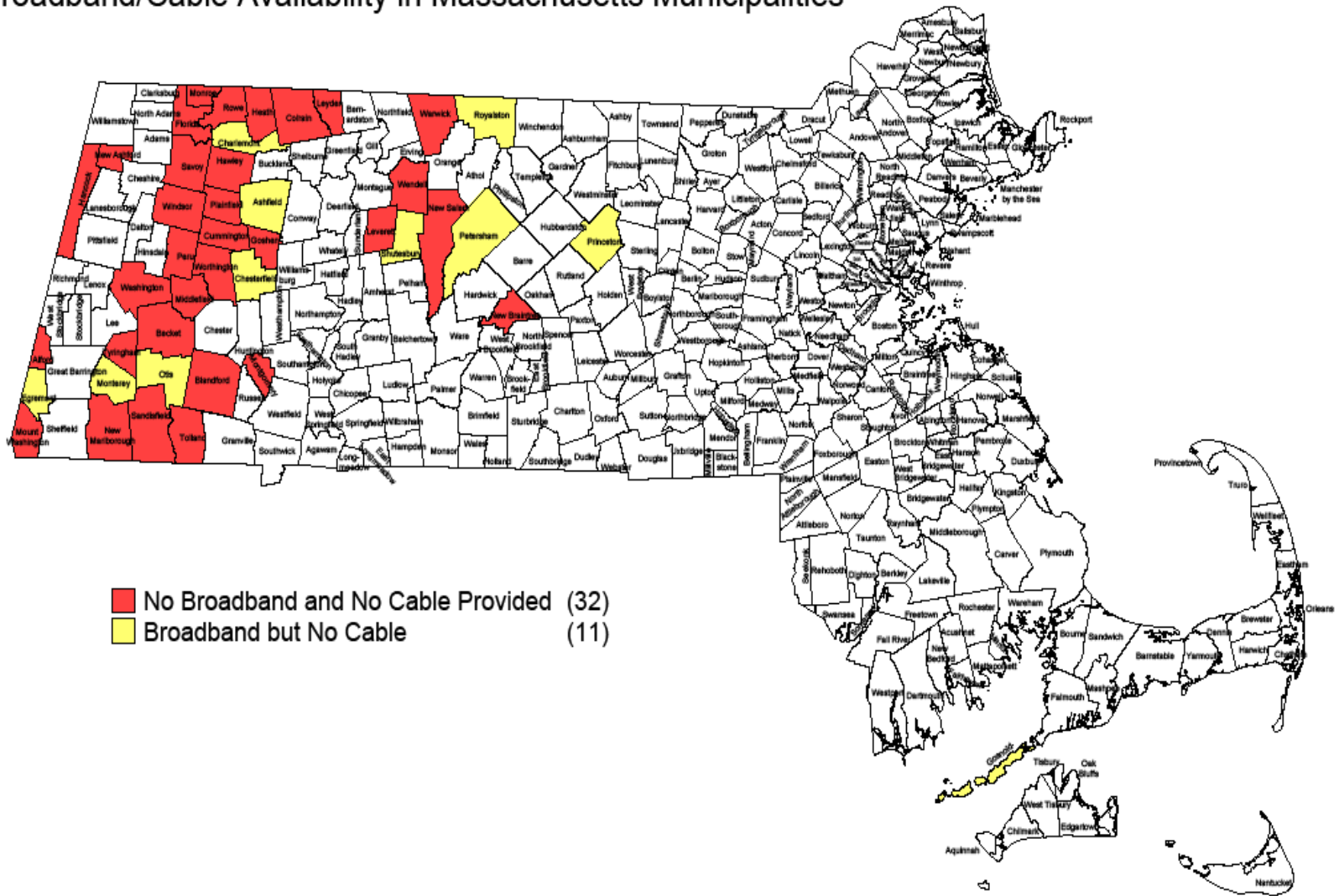
# Why is it happening?

- ⊙ Spectrum currently used for analog TV broadcast (700 MHz) is inefficiently used and valuable for other purposes
  - Roughly 10.5% of U.S. households rely on over-the-air broadcast (FCC Statistics May 2009)
  - Analog modulation delivers poorer signal quality than digital yet requires more spectrum
- ⊙ Benefits of the transition
  - Clearer TV picture for over-the-air viewers
  - Spectrum available to enhance public safety
  - Advanced wireless services, such as broadband

# Who is particularly affected?

- ⦿ Seniors
- ⦿ Disabled
- ⦿ Non-English Speaking
- ⦿ Low-Income
- ⦿ Viewers of “low-power” TV stations
  - 12 in Massachusetts: western, Boston, Cape
- ⦿ Rural
  - 43 Massachusetts towns with no cable TV

# Broadband/Cable Availability in Massachusetts Municipalities



# What do consumers need to do?

Nothing! ... if they already have digital TV set, or cable or satellite TV service connected to all their TV sets.

If they have analog TV set with no cable or satellite:

| Option   | Estimated Cost  |
|--|---|
| 1. Buy a box that converts digital signals to analog signals that your analog set can display. | \$40-\$70 if you buy a basic converter box<br>(\$10-\$30 if you use the NTIA coupon worth \$40) |
| 2. Buy a new television set with a built in ATSC digital tuner.                                | \$100 and up. (SDTV)  |
| 3. Subscribe to cable or satellite video service. (if available)                               | At least \$8-\$20/month (\$96-\$240/year) plus possible equipment rental fees                   |

# Top 5 confusions

- ⦿ How to set up the converter box
- ⦿ Consumers must buy a new television
- ⦿ Scheme cooked up by cable operators
- ⦿ Cable channels available with converter box
- ⦿ Consumers must buy television capable of high-definition reception (HDTV)

# DTC outreach efforts

- ◉ Mailings to Community Organizations, Town Halls, and Libraries
- ◉ Coordinating efforts with other state agencies, particularly Dept. of Elder Affairs.
- ◉ Senior Center Presentations
- ◉ On going DTC Consumer Hotline Training
- ◉ Possible Converter box set-up training for hotline staff
- ◉ Open forums/information booths

DTC is here to help!

For questions regarding the  
DTV transition, please  
contact the DTC consumer  
hotline at

1-800-392-6066 or  
617-305-3531