



The Michigan Chapter
National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors

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**MI-NATOA RELEASES 10 DISAPPOINTMENTS OF
CABLE DEREGULATION IN MICHIGAN**

Farmington, Mich., Feb. 23, 2009 – Today the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) released its 12-page report highlighting the disappointments of cable deregulation in Michigan since Public Act 480 of 2006 became effective.

“Since cable deregulation in Michigan became effective in 2007, the promises that were made have not been kept,” said Caren Collins, president of MI-NATOA. “Cable rates have increased, customer service has decreased and there is little evidence of more competition. It’s important that the Legislature and the public fully understand the current reality of the cable landscape, and our report supplies some much needed information.”

NATOA’s report focuses on ten disappointments with cable deregulation over the past two years, including:

- **Disappointment #1:** There is no objective way to fully measure the failures of PA 480.
- **Disappointment #2:** Widespread competition for cable companies has not developed.
- **Disappointment #3:** PA 480 deregulated the cable industry before competition really developed.
- **Disappointment #4:** Video service prices have hit all-time highs since PA 480 was passed.
- **Disappointment #5:** Cable’s customer service has plummeted to all-time lows since PA 480 was passed.
- **Disappointment #6:** Deregulation of the cable industry has threatened the existence of PEG programming.
- **Disappointment #7:** Promised jobs haven’t materialized.
- **Disappointment #8:** PA 480 has damaged local economies.
- **Disappointment #9:** PA 480 has dramatically increased litigation.

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- **Disappointment #10:** Bills designed to correct some of these problems haven't moved in the Michigan Legislature.

A major concern to MI-NATOA is disappointment #6, having to do with how deregulation is threatening the existence of public, education and government (PEG) access channels. The telecommunications companies are cutting back financial support and making the PEG channels less accessible. Without PEG, communities lose a public asset that helps them communicate with their constituents.

“Public, education and government access programming is one of the last well-focused mediums still available for the public’s use,” said Jerry Ellis, mayor of Farmington Hills. “PEG programming increases the transparency of local governments, showcases the uniqueness of individual communities and allows parents to be better connected with their children’s schools.”

MI-NATOA urges lawmakers to:

- Immediately reinstate local officials’ right to adopt and enforce **customer service and consumer protection laws**.
- Immediately require all video service providers **treat PEG channels in a manner identical to the treatment offered to broadcast channels** and that a promised **2% PEG-sustaining fee** be provided.
- Immediately adopt a **fair process for resolving disputes** between video service providers and local franchise entities. The current proposal threatens that the losing party must pay potentially thousands of dollars in penalties.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the report, please visit www.makeCableBETTER.org.

About MI-NATOA and www.makeCableBETTER.org :

MI-NATOA is the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA). This professional organization is dedicated to helping its members improve cable and telecommunications service throughout Michigan. It works with local government agencies to provide up-to-date information of both local and national legislation to help maximize the effective use of cable and telecommunications systems.

MakeCableBETTER.org is a partner web site for MI-NATOA focusing on providing information about cable issues to the public at-large, and to urge lawmakers to reverse the problems created by Michigan’s deregulation of the cable industry in 2006. For more information, visit www.mi-natoa.org or www.MakeCableBetter.org.