**** January 6, 2021

**Satellite Television Service Questionnaire**

Greetings,

This short, voluntary questionnaire is being distributed by the U.S. Copyright Office, as part of a study requested by Congress, to certain subscribers of satellite service from either AT&T’s DirecTV or DISH Network; specifically, those whose households fall into any of the following categories:

* Households that cannot receive a local over-the-air signal via an antenna.
* Households that received a waiver from a local network affiliate to receive a distant broadcast signal.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* “Grandfathered” households that received distant signals via a section 119 license on or before October 31, 1999.
* Households eligible for the statutory exemption related to receiving “C-Band” satellite signals.
* RVs and commercial trucks.
* Households located in “short markets” (meaning that they do not receive one or more of the four most widely available network stations).

If you don’t subscribe to either service and/or your household does not fall into one of the categories above, this letter does not apply to you. However, if you are a satellite subscriber that falls into one of the above categories, we have some questions about changes to your service that may have taken place in 2020. There are six questions in total, which should not take more than a few minutes to answer. **Answering these questions is purely voluntary on your part.** We are asking these questions because Congress has directed the Copyright Office to produce a report on the effect of recent changes on the market for satellite television services, and we need to gather as much information as possible in order to do so. We appreciate your assistance.

Background

The Copyright Act (section 119 of Title 17) gives satellite companies a license to re-transmit distant broadcast signals to certain subscribers, known as “unserved households.” Distant broadcast signals are network television stations (such as ABC or Fox, but not including cable channels such as HBO or CNN) that originate from outside the subscriber’s area and are intended to serve other geographic markets. A section 119 license is why you may have been receiving network television stations from distant cities, such as New York or Los Angeles, instead of cities closer to your home. In the past, unserved households eligible to receive distant broadcast signals were those in the six categories listed above.

Due to a change in section 119 that took effect on June 1, 2020, fewer subscribers are now eligible to receive distant broadcast signals. Now, only the last two categories listed above (RVers/commercial truckers and subscribers in “short markets”) are covered. Additionally, in order to rely on section 119 to service these subscribers, satellite companies are now required to deliver local broadcast network service into every designated market area (DMA) in the country—covering the entire continental United States, Hawaii, and parts of Alaska. The result of these changes is that you may see differences in the distant broadcast networks, local broadcast networks, or both that are available through your satellite service.

When Congress revised section 119 last year, it outlined two goals: First, by reducing eligibility for section 119 licenses, it wanted to encourage satellite companies to carry local broadcast stations more relevant to subscribers, instead of stations from a limited number of distant large cities. Second, it wanted to ensure that subscribers with no fixed address—such as RVers and commercial truckers—and subscribers in “short markets” could continue to receive stations from distant markets. The purpose of the Copyright Office’s study is to help Congress determine whether these two goals have been met.

**Questionnaire**

When answering, please indicate if you receive satellite service at your residence, your RV, or your commercial truck. If you do not answer every question, please indicate in your response which question(s) you are answering.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Contact Information (email or telephone):**

**My satellite provider is:**  [ ]  AT&T’s DirecTV

 [ ]  DISH Network

**I receive satellite service at (check all that are applicable):**  [ ]  My residence

 [ ]  My RV

 [ ]  My commercial truck

**I qualify/qualified as an “unserved household” because I fit into the following category (check all that apply, if you know)**:

[ ]  Households that cannot receive a local over-the-air signal via an antenna.

[ ]  Households that received a waiver from a local network affiliate to receive a distant signal.

[ ]  “Grandfathered” households that received distant signals via a section 119 license on or before October 31, 1999.

[ ]  Households eligible for the statutory exemption related to receiving “C-Band” satellite signals.

[ ]  RVs and commercial trucks.

[ ]  Households located in “short markets” (meaning that they do not receive one or more of the four most widely available network stations).

1. **Before June 1, 2020, did you receive distant signal retransmissions (i.e., network stations from markets outside of your local area) from DISH or DirecTV?**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

* 1. **If your answer is “yes,” did you continue to receive the same distant networks after June 1, 2020?**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

* + 1. **If you continued to receive the same distant networks, did the price of your subscription increase or decrease?**

**If it did, was the reason for the change explained?**

* + 1. **If you did not continue to receive the same distant networks after June 1, 2020, did you receive access to new networks that are physically closer to you as a replacement for the distant networks you no longer receive?**

**Did the price of your subscription increase or decrease?**

**If it did, was the reason for the change explained?**

* 1. **If your answer is “no,” did the price of your satellite subscription increase or decrease on or after June 1, 2020?**

**If it did, was the reason for the change explained?**

1. **Before June 1, 2020, did you receive local network retransmissions (i.e., network stations from a nearby market) from DISH or DirecTV?**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

1. **If your answer is “yes,” did you continue to receive local networks from DISH or DirecTV on or after June 1, 2020?**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

* + 1. **If you continued to receive local networks, did the price of your subscription increase or decrease?**

**If it did, was the reason for the change explained?**

* + 1. **If you did not continue to receive local networks, did you receive access to replacement networks?**

**Were these replacement networks physically closer to or further from your location?**

**Did the price of your subscription increase or decrease?**

**If it did, was the reason for the change explained?**

1. **If you received distant network retransmissions from DISH or DIRECTV before June 1, 2020, did you begin to receive local network retransmissions from DISH or DIRECTV on or after that date?**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

* 1. **If you did begin to receive local networks on or after June 1, 2020, were the local networks in addition to or instead of the distant network retransmissions?**

* 1. **If you did begin to receive local networks on or after June 1, 2020, did the price of your subscription increase or decrease?**
1. **Have you changed television service providers since June 1, 2020?**

 [ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  I don’t know

* 1. **If your answer is “yes,” did you change to a different satellite provider, or did you obtain television service from a different type of service provider (such as a cable provider)?**

**Why did you change television service providers**?

1. **If you are a commercial trucker, which satellite carrier do you use?**
2. **If you are an RVer, which satellite carrier do you use?**

**Do you also receive satellite service at your residence?**

**If so, is your home satellite carrier the same as your RV satellite carrier?**

Please send your answers to **section119@copyright.gov** by **March 8, 2021**. You may fill out this form as a Word document and attach it to an email or write your answers directly into an email. Your name will appear in the public record with your answers, but other personally identifying information (such as your address, telephone number, or email address) will be removed.

If you have any questions, please contact Kimberley Isbell, deputy director of policy and international affairs, kisbell@copyright.gov, or Chris Weston, senior counsel for policy and international affairs, cwes@copyright.gov. They can be reached by telephone at 202-707-1027.

Please note that the Copyright Office is also soliciting public comments on this issue via the *Federal Register* at [copyright.gov/policy/119](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnlam%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C85Q243QV%5Ccopyright.gov%5Cpolicy%5C119). This questionnaire is an additional effort intended to reach satellite subscribers who otherwise would not be aware of the *Federal Register* notice-and-comment process. This questionnaire and the *Federal Register* process are meant to complement each other, and not be duplicative, so if you choose to complete this questionnaire, please do not respond to the Federal Register notice.

Thank you very much for taking the time out to answer our questions. Your responses will help us advise Congress as it evaluates the functioning of the satellite market.

U.S. Copyright Office

1. A “distant broadcast signal” is a network television station (such as ABC or Fox, but not including cable channels such as HBO or CNN) that originates from outside the subscriber’s area and is intended to serve a different geographic market. For example, a New York-based ABC affiliate would be a distant broadcast signal when received by a household in Iowa. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)