



MiCTA Legislative & Regulatory Update January 2010 – Newsflash!

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By
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NEWSFLASH!

FCC Seeks Extension of Broadband Plan Deadline

On January 7th, the FCC asked Congress to extend the Broadband Plan deadline by four weeks.

In a statement, Colin Crowell, senior counselor to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski, said, “In order to ensure that there is sufficient time to more fully brief commissioners and key members of Congress, to get additional input from stakeholders and to fully digest the exhaustive record before the agency, the chairman has requested from congressional leaders a short extension of four weeks in order to deliver the final plan.”

While the FCC is requesting this delay, realization they would not be ready must not have been determined until now....or they were hoping by peddling even faster they could still make the deadline (and keeping mum about any doubts). During the December 16th FCC “open” meeting, kudos were being given all-around for the staff who were working late-nights and through the holiday period to meet the deadline, without mentioning the potential of a delay. Blair Levin, directing the broadband plan effort, had been quoted within the last month as saying that not only would they be on-time in submitting the plan to Congress but they might even beat the deadline.

Although several news sources are reporting that industry experts believe the delay will cause no harm and might in-fact be good, FCC Commissioner McDowell was not pleased to hear of the delay request. He noted, “I am disappointed that the FCC’s broadband team is unable to deliver a national broadband plan to Congress by the statutorily mandated deadline. “ He continued, “At the same time, I appreciate that Chairman Genachowski shared the news of his decision with me Tuesday afternoon. Once we receive a draft plan, I hope the document will reflect the benefit of the additional time being taken to prepare it.”

So, if the deadline extension is approved, we’ll all just wait on pins-and-needles a bit longer to digest how the draft plan proposes a massive overhaul of ICT in the U.S.