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the federal government that digital broadcast technology be in place by December 31st of 2000 (sic). Solves the marketing problem. How do you get somebody to buy a digital television or how do you get somebody to buy the technology so they can use their existing television for a digital signal, because there's a converter box that you can buy, that will cost a couple hundred dollars, but how do you get people to buy into that? One way you get them to buy into that is with a federal mandate that everything will be digital on December 31st, year 2003. There are markets right now that are digital. The...it's a multistep process. There are markets now that are digital.

SENATOR BEUTLER: So, if I'm understanding you correctly, Senator, you're indicating that this particular industry, which is interested in this exemption today, contrary to being forced into this change by the federal government, actually probably welcomed it because, in the future, using this new band, they will be in a better position to compete against a lot of other industries...

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: I...

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...for these new kinds of services that will come through an interactive TV. Is that what you're suggesting?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: In my...in my personal view, the change will be very beneficial to the broadcast industry and it will be very beneficial to us. It will be both.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. Let me ask you this then in terms of precedence. I mean this...this is a change that does an industry good. The good comes in the future. If there's a rough point for them, it comes in the short term. They're seeking...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...some advantage in the short term, arguing the problem of the short term to them financially. But what kind of a precedent does this set? I mean, are you aware of any time in the past when there has been a short-term government requirement or a requirement for change on the part of either