

revenues from non-television affiliated companies.

17. *Cable and Other Program Distribution.* The SBA has developed a small business size standard for cable and other program distribution services, which includes all such companies generating \$12.5 million or less in revenue annually. This category includes, among others, cable operators, direct broadcast satellite ("DBS") services, home satellite dish ("HSD") services, multipoint distribution services ("MDS"), multichannel multipoint distribution service ("MMDS"), Instructional Television Fixed Service ("ITFS"), local multipoint distribution service ("LMDS"), satellite master antenna television ("SMATV") systems, and open video systems ("OVS"). According to the Census Bureau data, there are 1,311 total cable and other pay television service firms that operate throughout the year of which 1,180 have less than \$10 million in revenue. We address below each service individually to provide a more precise estimate of small entities.

18. *Cable Operators.* The Commission has developed, with SBA's approval, our own definition of a small cable system operator for the purposes of rate regulation. Under the Commission's rules, a "small cable company" is one serving fewer than 400,000 subscribers nationwide. We last estimated that there were 1,439 cable operators that qualified as small cable companies. Since then, some of those companies may have grown to serve over 400,000 subscribers, and others may have been involved in transactions that caused them to be combined with other cable operators. Consequently, we estimate that there are fewer than 1,439 small entity cable system operators that may be affected by the decisions and rules proposed in this Further Notice.

19. The Communications Act, as amended, also contains a size standard for a small cable system operator, which is "a cable operator that, directly or through an affiliate, serves in the aggregate fewer than 1% of all subscribers in the United States and is not affiliated with any entity or entities whose gross annual revenues in the aggregate exceed \$250,000,000." The Commission has determined that there are 68,500,000 subscribers in the United States. Therefore, an operator serving fewer than 685,000 subscribers shall be deemed a small operator if its annual revenues, when combined with the total annual revenues of all of its affiliates, do not exceed \$250 million in the aggregate. Based on available data, we find that the number of cable operators serving 685,000 subscribers or less totals

approximately 1,450. Although it seems certain that some of these cable system operators are affiliated with entities whose gross annual revenues exceed \$250,000,000, we are unable at this time to estimate with greater precision the number of cable system operators that would qualify as small cable operators under the definition in the Communications Act.

20. *Direct Broadcast Satellite ("DBS") Service.* Because DBS provides subscription services, DBS falls within the SBA-recognized definition of cable and other program distribution services. This definition provides that a small entity is one with \$12.5 million or less in annual receipts. There are four licensees of DBS services under part 100 of the Commission's rules. Three of those licensees are currently operational. Two of the licensees that are operational have annual revenues that may be in excess of the threshold for a small business. The Commission, however, does not collect annual revenue data for DBS and, therefore, is unable to ascertain the number of small DBS licensees that could be impacted by these proposed rules. DBS service requires a great investment of capital for operation, and we acknowledge, despite the absence of specific data on this point, that there are entrants in this field that may not yet have generated \$12.5 million in annual receipts, and therefore may be categorized as a small business, if independently owned and operated.

21. *Home Satellite Dish ("HSD") Service.* Because HSD provides subscription services, HSD falls within the SBA-recognized definition of cable and other program distribution services. This definition provides that a small entity is one with \$12.5 million or less in annual receipts. The market for HSD service is difficult to quantify. Indeed, the service itself bears little resemblance to other MVPDs. HSD owners have access to more than 265 channels of programming placed on C-band satellites by programmers for receipt and distribution by MVPDs, of which 115 channels are scrambled and approximately 150 are unscrambled. HSD owners can watch unscrambled channels without paying a subscription fee. To receive scrambled channels, however, an HSD owner must purchase an integrated receiver-decoder from an equipment dealer and pay a subscription fee to an HSD programming package. Thus, HSD users include: (1) Viewers who subscribe to a packaged programming service, which affords them access to most of the same programming provided to subscribers of other MVPDs; (2) viewers who receive only non-subscription programming;

and (3) viewers who receive satellite programming services illegally without subscribing. Because scrambled packages of programming are most specifically intended for retail consumers, these are the services most relevant to this discussion.

22. *Multipoint Distribution Service ("MDS"), Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service ("MMDS") Instructional Television Fixed Service ("ITFS") and Local Multipoint Distribution Service ("LMDS").* MMDS systems, often referred to as "wireless cable," transmit video programming to subscribers using the microwave frequencies of the MDS and ITFS. LMDS is a fixed broadband point-to-multipoint microwave service that provides for two-way video telecommunications.

23. In connection with the 1996 MDS auction, the Commission defined small businesses as entities that had annual average gross revenues of less than \$40 million in the previous three calendar years. This definition of a small entity in the context of MDS auctions has been approved by the SBA. The MDS auctions resulted in 67 successful bidders obtaining licensing opportunities for 493 Basic Trading Areas ("BTAs"). Of the 67 auction winners, 61 met the definition of a small business. MDS also includes licensees of stations authorized prior to the auction. As noted, the SBA has developed a definition of small entities for pay television services, which includes all such companies generating \$12.5 million or less in annual receipts. This definition includes multipoint distribution services, and thus applies to MDS licensees and wireless cable operators that did not participate in the MDS auction. Information available to us indicates that there are approximately 850 of these licensees and operators that do not generate revenue in excess of \$12.5 million annually. Therefore, for purposes of the IRFA, we find there are approximately 850 small MDS providers as defined by the SBA and the Commission's auction rules.

24. The SBA definition of small entities for cable and other program distribution services, which includes such companies generating \$12.5 million in annual receipts, seems reasonably applicable to ITFS. There are presently 2,032 ITFS licensees. All but 100 of these licenses are held by educational institutions. Educational institutions are included in the definition of a small business. However, we do not collect annual revenue data for ITFS licensees, and are not able to ascertain how many of the 100 non-educational licensees would be