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KAREN CHARLES PETERSON  
COMMISSIONER

July 3, 2019

Chairman Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
17 State Street  
Buckland MA 01370

Re: License Expiration Notice

Dear Chairman:

According to the Department of Telecommunications and Cable's (Department) records, your cable television license (license) with Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. expires on 8/13/2022. Federal law provides for a formal renewal process that begins between 36 and 30 months before a license expires. As the Issuing Authority, you may begin the process of determining your community's cable-related needs and review Comcast Cable Communications, Inc.'s performance under the current license. This is known as the "ascertainment process." You must notify Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. if you elect to begin the ascertainment process. You may also be required to begin the ascertainment process if you receive a notice from Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. invoking the formal renewal process; you must begin the ascertainment process within six months of receiving such notice.

You may want to form a cable advisory committee (CAC) as part of the formal renewal process and delegate to it certain duties. If you form a CAC, please provide the Department with the name and contact information for at least one CAC member. I have enclosed a fact sheet describing the typical responsibilities of a CAC, and please see M.G.L. c. 268A concerning potential conflicts of interest for both municipal officials and CAC members.

For your convenience, the Department has prepared a "Practical Guide to Cable Television License Renewal" that is available at [www.mass.gov/dtc](http://www.mass.gov/dtc). The Department is also available to advise you regarding your duties and rights during the renewal process. While we cannot assist you with substantive negotiations, we would be happy to meet with you and/or your CAC to discuss procedural requirements.

If you would like to schedule a meeting or if you have any questions regarding the renewal process, please contact the Department at 617-305-3580 or [dte.filing@mass.gov](mailto:dte.filing@mass.gov).

Sincerely,

Shonda D. Green  
Department Secretary



## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE

### Cable Advisory Committee

Under Massachusetts regulations, an Issuing Authority ("IA"), such as the mayor of a city or the board of selectmen of a town, may appoint a Cable Advisory Committee ("CAC") to advise the IA throughout the licensing process. 207 C.M.R. § 3.01(3). In many instances, the CAC remains as an active committee throughout the term of the license. Currently, there are over 280 CACs in the Commonwealth. The composition of the CAC is determined by the IA, including the number of members on the CAC.

The IA may, at its discretion, define the role and responsibilities of the CAC to the extent permitted under G.L. c. 166A. Thus, there is almost complete local control as to the tasks assigned to an advisory committee, so long as these tasks do not conflict with the statutory requirements of the IA in G.L. c. 166A. While an IA may delegate to a CAC the authority to negotiate a license agreement, an IA may not delegate authority to execute such an agreement. CAC responsibilities vary according to the current status of the license or the objectives of the IA. The following list includes some typical responsibilities assigned to CACs in the Commonwealth:

- Inform and educate the public about cable television service;
- Assess the cable needs of the community and recommend policy changes;
- Conduct regular meetings with cable company representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest;
- Report to the IA on company compliance with the license;
- Supervise the cable operator's response to complaints;
- Respond to citizen's questions regarding the cable television system; and
- Keep abreast of community programming issues.

CACs are considered "governmental bodies" within the purview of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest law, G.L. c. 268A.

Recognizing that CACs fulfill an important and valuable link between the IA, the licensee, and the citizens of the community, the Department of Telecommunications and Cable ("Department") seeks to build positive professional relationships with the CACs. The Department's staff works closely with local committees to educate them on the licensing process and improve information-sharing.

The Department's program includes an informational presentation available to communities. Please contact the Department to schedule a presentation or to discuss any cable licensing matter.