The national transition to digital television (DTV) will be taking place on June 12. Thanks to the DTV Delay Act, which Congress passed and President Obama signed in February, millions of Americans, including those in our most vulnerable communities, have had the opportunity to get ready for Digital TV.

Some people are still not ready for the transition, however, including many in our area. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration has identified the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose market as being one of the metropolitan areas that is least prepared for the transition.

It is important for everyone to realize that the deadline switch will not be pushed back again. There will not be another delay. June 12th is the analog shut down deadline for all full-power television stations.

If you rely on free, over-the-air TV and use “rabbit ears” or a rooftop antenna with a television that uses an analog tuner, you aren’t ready, and you will lose your television service on June 12 if you don’t act now.

You have three ways you can prepare for the transition:

- Subscribe to cable or satellite TV service;
- Purchase a television with a digital tuner; or
- Buy a converter box which plugs into your analog TV and will convert the signal to digital.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included funding to allow the Department of Commerce to help more Americans with the transition to Digital TV. If you choose to buy a converter box, you can apply for a coupon to help toward the cost of the purchase. Commerce's TV Converter Box Coupon Program provides $40 coupons, which covers most of the cost, for eligible household towards the purchase of TV converter boxes.

As of today, thanks to the additional funds and collaboration with community partners, the Department of Commerce has put more than 55 million coupons in the hands of Americans to help with the transition.

If you already have a coupon, make sure to purchase a converter box at a partnering retail stores like Target or RadioShack, take it home and hook it up right away. You can receive digital television now.

You can get more information about the transition, apply for coupons or find a retailer near you at www.DTV2009.gov or by calling 1-888-DTV-2009.

If you’re already prepared for the transition, help make sure your friends and family are ready too.

PLEASE NOTE: Converter box coupons may be ordered (pending availability) through July 31, 2009. Coupon delivery takes nine business days from the date the application is received. The DTV Delay Act changed the law to allow eligible households with coupons that have expired without being used to request replacement coupons. Once received, consumers should use their coupons to purchase a converter box and install that box as soon as possible. For technical assistance, consumers can call 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) or go to www.dtv.gov .