

Senate Bill Sets Spring 2009 Demise for Analog Television

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Senate Commerce Committee staffers have drafted a bill setting April 7, 2009 -- the day after March Madness ends -- as the date to end nationwide analog TV broadcasts and complete the switch to digital transmission.

Millions of people who watch traditional, over-the-air analog broadcasts on sets with antennas will have to buy new digital TVs or set-top converter boxes to keep getting signals.

It will also bring a windfall in federal revenue by allowing the government to auction off spectrum to private companies who hope to exploit it for wireless Internet access and other high-tech uses.

In a letter yesterday, Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates and 30 other executives urged Congress to set a deadline quickly and argued it will be a boon to the economy.

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