

U.S. Senate eyes ending analog TV in 2009

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A Senate committee will meet Wednesday to discuss a new plan to end analog television broadcasts in the United States in early 2009.

The move would convert all U.S. television broadcasting to digital and allow the government to sell off some of the vacated analog bandwidth to wireless broadband providers and earmark the rest for emergency communications.

"The most important thing about this draft is that it's going to make spectrum available to police and firefighters around the country," said Senate Commerce Committee Chief of Staff Lisa Sutherland.

The Washington Post noted that the committee staff proposed April 7, 2009, as the date for the changeover so it would not interfere with the college basketball championships, which draw enormous audiences.

Most viewers, however, would likely not notice the change since digital televisions are already commonplace, and cable and satellite services would convert the signal.

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