

CAB: We Don't Oppose Nielsen 'LPM' Launch

By Linda Moss

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The Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau Monday denied that it is opposing the launch of "Local People Meters," saying that its beef is with Nielsen Media Research trying to roll any of that sample into the national audience panel just yet.

"There is no opinion that says we are against the LPM rollout," CAB vice president of research Ira Sussman said Monday, in response to press reports regarding a letter he sent to Nielsen last week.

Sussman's remarks came after representatives of Don't Count Us Out -- a coalition of Hispanic and African-American groups opposed to the launch of LPMs -- claimed during a conference call with reporters that the CAB had come out against the LPMs.

Sussman had written a letter to Nielsen CEO Susan Whiting on behalf of the CAB's Committee on National Cable Audience Measurement (COLCAM), asking for the ratings service to wait until its LPM system is accredited by the Media Research Council before adding homes from that sample into its national ratings panel.

"It is critical that all new Local People Meter markets meet established standards before being integrated into the national People Meter sample," Sussman said in the letter. "Because of our concern, we are asking you to include only LPM panels in the national sample that have been audited and accredited by the MRC. We believe this will preserve the high standards that have been set for Nielsen's national People Meter panel."

Most of the CAB's MSO members support the LPM rollouts, according to Sussman.

In the case of New York, where LPMs launched June 3, the logic is that the new meters will do a much better job measuring audiences in that DMA than the old metered-diary system, Sussman said.

In contrast, the national People Meter sample is working well, and it is accurate and accredited -- therefore, there should be no rush to alter it by adding the LPM homes before they are accredited, according to Sussman.

He added that his letter to Nielsen "had been taken out of context."

On Monday, the chief of a Hispanic group also told reporters Nielsen will probably face at least one additional lawsuit over its controversial LPM rollout Los Angeles.

A committee of Don't Count Us Out is mulling whether to proceed and sue Nielsen over the planned July 8 Los Angeles rollout, according to a member of the coalition, Alex Nogales, who is president of

the National Hispanic Media Coalition. Nogales said that at the very least, his organization will file an action against Nielsen, even if Don't Count Us Out doesn't.

Last week, Univision Communications Inc. lodged a suit in Los Angeles seeking to bar Nielsen from deploying LPMs in that city.

"If we need to launch our own personal legal challenge to Nielsen, we will do precisely that, and we will do it within the week," Nogales said.

During the press call, Nogales played down the fact that News Corp., a bitter foe of LPMs, has provided financial backing for Don't Count Us Out.

"Fox has its own reasons for attacking Nielsen, and we have ours," Nogales said.

During the call, Edward Rincon, an expert on the measurement of minority TV audiences, went through some of the criticisms of Nielsen's methodology in terms of measuring TV viewing by Hispanics, which he detailed in a 28-page white paper.

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