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DAT RECORDING AGREEMENT

HON. JOE BARTON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 22, 1990

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, today, it gives me great pleasure to join my colleagues in introducing the Digital Audio Tape Recorder Act of 1990. This legislation embodies a compromise that addresses introduction in the market of one of the newest sound recording devices, the digital audio tape [DAT] recorder. I am particularly pleased to report that this legislation is supported by Tandy Corp., one of the leaders of the consumer electronics industry and a company that has made great contributions to the Sixth District of Texas.

As my colleagues know, this legislation is the result of years of consideration and months of negotiation. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1987 by the recording industry to limit digital copying by DAT machines, the recording industry followed the suggestion of Members of both Houses of Congress and joined hands with the consumer electronics industry to seek a solution. Last summer, executives from both the recording industry and audio component manufacturers convened to discuss the problems involving digital recording.

From these negotiations emerged an unprecedented pact among historical adversaries. This pact proposed legislative action on a technical effort to limit digital copying of copyright protected material on DAT machines. These industry leaders agreed to recommend the implementation of a standardized electronic circuit called the serial copy management system, or SCMS, into machines. SCMS is a system by which DAT machines can be used for digital-to-digital copying but will be precluded from digital copies of copies.

The DAT machine takes a quantum leap in the realm of taping technology. These machines will enable music listeners to audibly appreciate the symphonic quality of sound recordings previously apparent only to audiophiles with the most advanced analog tape recorders. Now, American consumers should finally have access to the technological advancement in sound recording for which they have long awaited.

Let us leave the day of the dinosaur and proceed toward a new and more innovative technological future by enacting this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to expeditiously enact this historic compromise.