February 18, 1998

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
Room 222
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

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RE: RM-9208, Petition for a Microstation Radio Broadcasting Service

To whom it may concern:

I write to support the petition for rulemaking request to establish a domestic microbroadcasting service, but with the following modifications from the original petition.

In section *1.4 - Proposed Radio Frequency Allocations*, Mr. Leggett proposes to assign "one AM broadcast and one FM broadcast channel to the Microstation radio broadcasting service...." claiming that the use of single channels would limit the impact on existing stations. Unfortunately, for the stations that currently occupy the selected frequency, the impact would be significant. It would be far better for the FCC to solve the frequency allocation issue for microcasting in the following manner:

1. End the practice of licensing translators for distant stations, and sunset those translators already granted. Programming diversity -- what micro radio promises -- is not served by yet another outlet for satellite-fed National Public Radio shows, or virtually indistiguishable religious programming with interchangeable homilies.

2. Permit microcasters to occupy channels in the broadcast bands per existing spacing requirements (if translators are ended as above, otherwise allow 2nd adjacent FM placements) consistent with a maximum power level of less than 100 watts (i.e., as the old class D service) in rural/suburban fringe areas, and less than 50 watts in urban cores, if the lower power levels permit more applicants to operate in crowded urban band conditions.

In section *1.5 - Proposed Radio Transmitter Characteristics*, the petition limits transmitter output power to one watt or less. As noted above, I believe that a variable power level under 100 watts should be the upper limit to this class of service, consistent with high signal purity and technical proficiency of the applicant.

Also, the petition notes that each transmitter be "crystal-controlled." The final language should not preclude the use of phase-lock-loop control, which does reference to a crystal.

In conclusion, I endorse the RM-9208 Petition for a Microstation Radio Broadcasting Service, with the following changes: a) more than one FM or AM channel, as opportunities exist (or can be made to exist via discontinuance of translators or using 2nd-adjacent channel spacing); b) an upper power limit of 100 watts as outlined above.

Cordially yours,

R. W. Miller
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In the Matter of

Micropower radio docket number RM 9208

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COMMENTS OF

William T. Croghan Jr.
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18 February 1998

Comments, RM 9208
Petition for creation of a low power broadcasting service.

1. The petitioner has asked for a localized, low power broadcast service to be created for very localized service to the public. I support the basic concept with some reservations. For the purpose of this comment I will refer to the newly proposed service as the Local Radio Service.

2. It is important that this service be provided as a method of low power, non-commercial output of opinion, entertainment and information for the public. It should have strict regulations and safeguards to prevent chains of such stations from becoming a replacement for existing FM and AM stations, translators or boosters.

3. I believe that the service must maintain High technical standards. As a Professional Broadcast Engineer, Certified by The Society Of Broadcast Engineers, I am aware of the difficulties that can be produced by poor technical operation. I would suggest that the new service (herein called the "Local Radio Service") be required to meet strong standards of technical operation. The FCC requires all radio services to meet minimum standards of technical operation for such stations as Family Radio Services, Amateur Radio Service, General Mobile Radio Service, Business Radio Services, Part 15 Radio services, Cellular Radio services, Maritime Radio services and Aviation Radio services. If these services can maintain minimum standards, so can the proposed news service

Some of those standards should be:

a. Frequency tolerance, the same as a commercial FM and AM station, and well within normal equipment tolerances today. These are looser than most 2 way radio tolerances!

b. Power not to exceed 1 watt Transmitter output. Tolerance to be not more than 5% high, with no lower limit. In no case should the combination of transmitter power output, antenna gain, and location permit a Local Radio Service Station to exceed the power permitted a regular part 73 licensee at the same location. These limits will prevent abuse of the service.

c. Antenna's to be limited to Unity gain for FM's and not more than ¼ wavelength for AM stations. Tower lighting, painting and FAA acceptance the same as currently required of all stations. Limits to prevent abuse. Tower specs are a safety issue, and this service should not be exempt from the rules.

d. Bandwidth to meet the same limits as current FM and AM stations, i.e. not to exceed the standards listed in part 73. This is to help assure Interference protection.

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e. Modulation limits to be 100% for both AM and FM.

f. No subcarriers other than the conventional pilots used for stereophonic operation. Stereo operation will be optional. Stereo or not should be the option of the service provider.

g. Spurious radiation of all types must meet the same standards as other broadcast services listed in part 73.

h. All equipment must be certified compliant with the rules. Kit built equipment will be acceptable, however must be certified compliant by a FCC licensed Radiotelephone General class operator.

j. Unattended operation and remote control operation would be prohibited.

k. Operation must be suspended immediately if Interference is caused to any part 73 licensed broadcasters. Proof of said interference is upon the accuser, resolution is upon the Local Radio Service operator.

l. Operation must be suspended if interference is caused to any listeners in the immediate area of the Local Radio Service station. Proof of interference is upon the accuser, resolution is upon the Local Radio Service Operator.

m. Networks of such stations may not be formed that provide more than 3 simultaneous real time transmissions for periods to exceed 4 hours per 24 hour period. Retransmission's of commercial and non-commercial part 73 licensed radio stations for more than 4 hours per 24 hour period is not permitted. All such rebroadcasts must be with the permission of the part 73 licensed radio station. This requirement is to prevent the use of this service to form some type of substitute for Regular part 73 licensed stations. 4 hours per day should permit the broadcast of local sports events, meetings, concerts or special purpose activities such as The State of the Union Address.

n. The Local Radio Service Stations are not exempt from the copyright laws. The operators must be aware of their legal responsibilities to pay royalties.

o. The Local Radio Service stations may not accept donations or payment for services except in strict accordance with the rules that affect part 73 stations. All requirements of the equal time and fairness doctrine must apply to these stations as well.

p. All Local Radio Service stations must be licensed to a person or legal entity that has an individual person as a trustee. In any event there must be a specified person who is legally responsible for the operation of the station. Local Radio Service stations are for individuals.

q. No-one who owns a reportable interest in a Commercial or non-commercial radio station under parts 73 will be eligible to hold a license in the Local Radio service.

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r. All stations must be licensed with fixed locations. Licenses would be issued on a first come, first serve basis with random drawings to resolve conflicting simultaneous applications. Protection will be provided from another station on the same frequency to a distance not to exceed 5 miles from the transmitter. Negotiated share time or close spaced operation is permitted. A challenge may be filed with the commission based on a license not being used regularly. If challenged, Stations must document operation on a regular basis. The competing applicants should try to resolve conflicts, but the commission has the final word. License terms should not exceed 2 years initially with 5 years upon renewal. This will permit the maximum number of stations without unjustly limiting access to the service.

s. Local Radio service stations would be exempt from the EAS requirements but could participate if the chose. EAS equipment is expensive, and these stations should be exempt from this requirement. They should be encouraged to monitor and pass on any alerts they receive.

t. The use of more than one frequency for this service will probably be necessary. To protect the commercial and Educational stations, The frequencies selected must be no closer than 2nd adjacent within the rural grade coverage of the licensed FM station or within the 1 mv signal of an AM station

Submitted by:

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