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To: A7.A7(SNESS)
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Subject: RM-9242

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Dear Commissioner:

I support low-power community broadcasting as outlined in RM-9242 for the following reasons:

There is a disturbing trend away from "localness."

Due to cost pressures in radio's new ownership environment, it is inevitable that more and more stations will be looking at outside programming sources. But, there are right ways and wrong ways to use networks and/or satellite-delivered programming. In our travels across the country, we're hearing far too many stations with very little local content or identification. Whether live local, satellite/network or live assist, there is a continuing need to identify with, and to provide companionship for, the local listener. All too often, we're not hearing it. Too many operators are succumbing to a "set it and forget it" mentality, and failing to provide enough local elements to bond with the local listener.

This bond with the local listener is the very heart and guts of radio. People use radio for companionship, and to connect with the world. If all they needed was music, they all have tape decks and CD players, neither of which bombard them with commercials or music they don't like. Radio is the reassuring voice. Good radio is part of the fabric of the local community. If all listeners ever hear is a slick, disembodied voice that never refers to anything local, the bond is broken. And we're talking around-the-clock, not just morning drive.

Network and satellite programming offers operators the chance to present programming of a caliber often not possible at the local level, but the better operators know how to mix it with local identification elements to preserve the vital local listener bond. Furthermore, network news is not enough, good and inexpensive as it is. If all people want is national news, they can get it from CNN on cable, anytime. And there's more to local information than just traffic reports and weather.

As an industry, we've spent many millions over the past two decades to tell people that we're their friends and companions, and that we reflect their values. Changes in the industry now appear to threaten this work-to-date.

This bond with the local listener is radio's long-term insurance policy. Radio's greatest asset is the FCC's allocation system, which limits the power of stations so that they only cover one city (or at most, a city and the region around it). That has always given radio a unique advantage over many other media, particularly media that are national in scope. The fact that there are so many stations in each local area, and that we have created so many formats to match tastes and lifestyles, gives us an unmatched opportunity to reflect the local listeners' feelings and values. It also offers advertisers unmatched opportunities to focus an advertising buy to reach very loyal audiences in a "pre-sold" environment.

As stations add more outside programming, those that keep enough local content to protect the listener bond will be the winners. Ever notice

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how many network affiliate VHF TV stations are adding massive amounts of local news in response to the onslaught of cable? They've learned the hard way that significant local imaging and content is the individual station's greatest asset.

Thank you,

James J. Henderson
Half Moon Bay, CA