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William Kennard, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20554
Ref. RM 9208, RM 9242

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Dear Chairman Kennard,

Our public airwaves are in trouble. Since the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the ownership and control of radio broadcasting has been concentrated in a few hands. No longer is it possible to hear creative or diverse programming of local interest and origination, or which challenges corporate commercial interests. Even so-called Public Broadcasting is beholden to their huge underwriters. The only challenge to this concentration of power and control in our media is provided by community radio. But today the FCC has severely restricted the formation of these radio stations by requiring huge application fees ($100,000??) and a minimum power of 100 watts; among other things. Anyone who wishes to serve their community with genuine radio programming must now do so illegally. Yet even here the FCC has responded to pressure by the corporate-dominated N.A.B. to shut these so-called "pirate" radio stations down. The big monopolies are clearly the pirates here, and the FCC is violating the First Amendment and its own responsibility by not providing legal low-power, community radio. The large corporations already have enough radio stations; the people deserve at least some of their airwaves back.

I ask that the FCC consider the best ideas of proposals RM 9208 and RM 9242, and specifically:

1. Allow micropower radio stations to operate legally with 50-100 or more watts of power, under prudent but not restrictive regulations against interference, etc.
2. Restrict ownership of these stations so that outside commercial interests cannot buy them.
3. Charge low fees for obtaining a license so people can create and own radio stations again.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Meece

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cc. Annette Clark-Smith, Rep. W.J. Tauzin, Rep. Tom Campbell, Sen. John McCain, A.R.D.