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Ted Langdell Creative Broadcast Services

209 East 12th Street, Marysville, CA 95901 (530) 741-1212 Fax (530) 749-1112 Pager (916) 816-9380

TedCreates@succeed.net

Providing Broadcast Coverage and Creative Services Since 1974

7/23/98

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of
Proposal for Creation of the Low Power FM
(LPFM) Broadcast Service

FCC RM-9242

Dear Sir,

Enclosed are 10 copies of my reply comments in this matter. I have mailed copies to the parties listed on the attached PROOF OF SERVICE.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Cordially,

Ted Langdell
Owner,
Ted Langdell Creative Broadcast Services

No. of Copies rec'd 0+9

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Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of
Proposal for Creation of the Low Power FM
(LPFM) Broadcast Service

FCC RM-9242

To: Federal Communications Commission

Reply-Comments of Ted Langdell

I support the creation of "Low Power" broadcasting stations for several powerful reasons:

- It's technically "do-able" in the same way that cellular telephone service is "do-able". Contrary to what some of the bigger broadcast groups contend, interference problems can be resolved, and RM-9242 outlines how; Existing, type-accepted broadcast exciters can be used by many of these stations; "self-inspection" by low-power broadcasters should be designed into the regulations.

- It creates more opportunities than now exist for people to establish or re-establish community through radio (and I'll cite some examples using my own community); In doing so, new advertising opportunities are created for neighborhood businesses. Many of them complain that they can't afford to advertise on radio in many markets;

- It balances the control of broadcast-allotted spectrum which has tilted toward larger and larger groups. They often are percieved to be more concerned with increasing already sizable profits, in part by purchasing enough stations to control a majority of a market's advertising revenue;

- It enables people including the very rich, "comfortably off", those "just getting by" and groups of very poor people to own stations, and thereby independently improve the quality of <u>their</u> lives and communities in a direct, hands-on way;

- Many communities need some way to "recover" local radio service which has been lost due to FCC rules changes; changes which allow owners to focus the programming and advertising at nearby larger markets within the local station's coverage;

- Low Power stations can be licensed in such a way that they will indeed, "serve the public interest, convenience and necessity". That's something that is perceived by some to have been given secondary status in recent years by some licensees, and throughsome of the Commission's

rule changes.

Reinvigorate Local Radio

In my own community, low power stations would help spark a reinvigoration of radio and ***local*** competition. Here's a look at how that could happen, with the adoption of the spirit behind RM-9242.

Marysville and Yuba City, CA have three AM's and two FM's licensed to this two-county area. We are 50 miles north of Sacramento (with 35 signals licensed to Sacramento or cities within 30 miles). We're also 50 miles south of Chico (with 11 stations licensed to Chico or cities a short distance away).

In comments opposing Low Power radio as proposed in RM-9242, Yuba City AM/FM General Manager Bob Harlan contends that, "In our market, there is extensive community radio coverage, especially KUBA-AM and KXCL-FM."

Today, only two stations [KUBA and KXCL (FM)] could be considered *actively* involved in this community of nearly 150-thousand people. KMYC (AM) is up for sale, fed by satellite sports programming with just one full-time employee on site, and that's to meet the main studio management employee requirement for KRCX (FM) which is operated from studios in Sacramento, and programs a Spanish-language format aimed at California's Capital City.

KOBO (AM), leases blocks of time to local Spanish and Punjabi (East Indian) programmers,who phone in much of their programs over dial-up lines via San Francisco. The ownership feeds co-owned KEST (AM), San Francisco up a low-fidelity phone line when the time on KOBO isn't sold locally.

That's quite a change from when I moved here in 1965 from the East Bay area near San Francisco.

Then, Yuba and Sutter Counties had three thriving AM stations actively involved in the community, and an undeveloped KRFD (FM) (co-owned with KMYC) The FM was a stack of Montovani records playing from a turntable. (No commercials. Just music and a station ID).

Almost the entire spectrum of local people were served by the combination of stations, which featured local news, local sports, and local people, in addition to music and special programs.

The stations also employed a healthy number of people, which in turn helped the economy, among them, three or four experienced engineers. Now, only 40 or so people work directly for radio stations here, 30 of them at KUBA/KXCL, and none of them are engineers. When something breaks, it doesn't get fixed, rapidly. More stations in a market can help rebuild employment opportunities for what is dwindling pool of broadcast engineers.

Docket 80-90 Effects Within 30 Miles.

Since Docket 80-90 took effect, three stations have been created in three relatively nearby towns.

KPPL (FM), Colusa served that small community for a while, but owners quickly targeted the

Chico market. KKCY (FM), Colusa was started on a shoestring and operated on one for a while, but when the founder was able to get the antenna on a 2,000 foot butte near Yuba City, he quickly sold to a Chico based chain. KKCY's owners feed the station a primarily satellite diet of programming, from a hub in Chico that serves four other co-owned stations. One is west of Chico in Corning, another is licensed to Paradise, and the newest operation is KMJE (FM), Gridley. KKCY and KMJE have sales offices in Yuba City, but little local activity except for sales people and an occasional "Boom Box" remote here, with the morning personalities who work in Chico. Do they ever serve their communities of license? After the offices close at 5 pm, there's no way to tell anyone that the computer on one of the co-owned stations has malfunctioned, or to let the station's listeners know about emergencies or situations that could affect them.

I mention the 80-90 docket stations because this is typical of what's happened with many of them within "earshot" of a larger market. The owners program for the larger market, not the community of license.

With limited power, the station classes outlined in RM-9242 will have to serve the communities of license. They won't be able to reach bigger markets. I suspect a number of these stations will be home based businesses for folks with radio experience, but not the cash to compete for scarce spectrum space. Low powered stations will be programmed by people who are doing it for the fun of it. That will create lively alternatives to over-researched megacorporation-owned stations, and some energizing competition for stations which have a default monopoly on local radio service.

Economic Benefits For Economically Depressed Areas

The options outlined in RM-9242 can help local economic development, by allowing lower-cost advertising options. Small businesses which need to get their "business news" out to people can do so without busting their bank accounts. That in turn fuels other aspects of economic growth and recovery in economically blighted or marginal areas. It also creates options in affluent areas, which in turn can lead to more people being employed in the radio business. Somebody has to train them. Why not through low power stations as outlined in this proposal.

I went from full-time employment to part time in news at KUBA/KXCL in 1990, so I could teach Radio and TV at Marysville High School. One of my intentions was to make the Radio-TV class operation self-supporting, and expand it through the sale of ads. I planned to use a low-power, Part 15-type station (or network of stations broadcasting from neighborhood school sites). Our main hurdle: Couldn't hear the signal for more than a block or two.

The classes of stations proposed in RM-9242 would have enabled this goal to be reached. The program was folded in 1995, after 23 years of training tomorrow's broadcasters. In the past, many of them were employed at local stations before moving up to bigger markets. Some still work at KUBA/KXCL.

Controlling Problems With Licensing, Regulation

In comments opposing RM-9208 and RM-9242, KUBA/KXCL general manager Bob Harlan acknowledges that, "Currently, the commercial radio dial is an orderly spectrum generally free from interference." He then cites instances where *un-licensed, "Pirate" stations* (my emphasis) created what he called "havoc with area stations, including my FM."

With licensing and regulation, low power stations can be integrated into the broadcast spectrum, without creating problems for other licensed broadcasters.

Harlan says: "In this day and age, commercial stations are for the most part highly responsible and closely regulated with regard to their power and frequency."

"Even so, the FCC is stretched beyond its limits to be able to deal with interferences from ham radios, pirate stations and other transmissions which disrupt the orderliness of the spectrum. I can see that "neighborhood" type stations, ***unregulated***, (my emphasis) could cause major headaches for commercial broadcasters and other "neighborhood" low power broadcasters."

Adopting RM-9242's recommendations would regulate the establishment of the signals he now fears, and enable people with a strong desire to enter radio station "custodianship" or "stewardship" to do so in spite of the increasing scarcity of stations available where they live.

Re-establish Serving Public Interest, Convience, Necessity as #1 Priority

Help those of us that wish to join in the job of serving the public interest, convenience and necessity do so through ownership and operation of a truly local radio station: where the owner's in the office, the office is in the community of license, and people listen because the programs and people are unique to their town or city.

Adopt RM-9242. We'll become like that small cafe which produces the food you really enjoy: a welcome break from the Mc Donalds' of the broadcast band.

If you are in our area, please feel free to call or come by. Yuba/Sutter is a great place to work, live and play. We need more ways to tell folks about it, and several low power stations would help. Then maybe we can work on our first local TV station, once all the DTV dust has settled.

Cordially,

Ted Langdell
Owner,
Ted Langdell Creative Broadcast Services
209 East 12th Street,
Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 741-1212 Fax (530) 749-1112
E-mail: langdell@succeed.net

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Ted Langdell, do hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing "Reply-Comments on RM-9242" was sent via first class mail, this 23rd day of July, 1998, to the following parties:

Henry L. Baumann
Executive Vice-President and General Counsel
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS
1771 N Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Counsel for State Broadcasters Associations
Richard R. Zaragoza
David D. Oxenford
FISHER WAYLAND COOPER LEADER & ZARAGOZA L.L.P.
2001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20006-1851

Counsel for USA Digital Radio, L.P.
Robert A. Mazer
Albert Shuldiner
VINSON & ELKINS, L.L.P.
1455 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-1008

American Community AM Broadcasters, Inc. (ACAMBA)
Bryan Smeathers, President
P.O. Box 973
Central City, KY 42330

RM-9242 Petitioner
J. Rodger Skinner, Jr. / President
TRA Communications Consultants, Inc.
6431 NW 65th Terrace
Pompano Beach, FL 33067-1546

S/Ted Langdell

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