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Social
Justice
Center of Marin

1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Suite 18, San Anselmo, CA 94960
Phone: (415)454-5027
FAX (415)454-5213

Nov. 30, 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Mr. William Kennard
Federal Communications Commission
1919 "M" Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

The board of directors of the Social Justice Center of Marin has learned that the Federal Communications Commission is considering changing its rules to allow economical low-power FM broadcasting.

We are an all-volunteer organization in Marin County, California, that addresses local, regional and national issues ranging from health care to labor conditions to foreign policy matters. Our ability to communicate with our fellow citizens in Marin County is severely limited by the fact that there are virtually no broadcast media with significant locally-oriented public affairs programming in our area. We also find that the range of news and information about world affairs is quite limited.

The massive consolidation of media ownership over the past few years makes it more pressing than ever that locally-owned, non-commercial, community-based, low power radio become a viable option for our community as well as communities all over the country. We would like to urge your Commission to legalize low power broadcasting as soon as possible. To do so would be a powerful way to support genuine democracy.

Besides the philosophical issues associated with low power broadcasting, there are practical concerns as well. The Social Justice Center of Marin has a Task Force working in the year 2000 (Y2K) problem. We understand that there could very well be serious power outages, disruption of public services and the flow of goods for the weeks, perhaps months, after the turn of the millennium. Locally based radio not dependent on the power grid (low par stations can be run from car batteries and solar panels) could become a vital communication resource during the emergencies that may arise at midnight, a little less than a year from now. The sooner such stations are up and running, the more likely that they will be useful during dire situations.

We appreciate your serious consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rienks

Jennifer Rienks, President
Social Justice Center of Marin

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