

Micropower radio is an idea whose time has come. Please enable an equitable system that will allow the public to construct and operate small radio voices within their own communities and spheres of influence.

This system could also revitalize the AM band by assigning expanded-band AM channels to low-power service in cases where interference to existing broadcasters would be minimal. This could also help minimize the impact of new low-power stations on an already crowded FM band.

These new stations should be non-commercial; first, sufficient funding for small operations is available through "underwriting" arrangements already well-known in the public broadcasting service; second, existing broadcasters would be less resistant to this new low-power service if they were protected from advertising competition; and third, the potentially independent community voices of commercial broadcasters are inevitably muted by the needs of and pressures from commercial advertisers. If, we create a low-power alternative to the existing broadcast model to enable independent new voices, we should make it possible for these new voices to speak without commercial censorship, no matter how benevolent or well-intentioned.

Further, perhaps the Commission could consider a licensing structure for the new low-power stations similar to that already used for the Amateur radio service. This might allay the fears that technically-inept "pirates" are invading the airwaves with their new low-power stations. After all, Amateur radio has shown itself to live up to the spirit of the public interest, convenience and necessity time and again, and has peacefully shared the spectrum with its commercial neighbors for most of the century.

Place me squarely in favor of low-power radio!

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