

Dear Honorable Senators and Congressman:

What Tauzin is Doing is Not Ethical it is an Abuse of Power and Authority.

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Date: 2-12-99
From: Mr. Joseph D'Alessandro
94 Angola Estates
Lewes, Delaware 19958
302-945-1554
Subject: Member # 8512 7568 1596 4858 ACLU

Feb 11, 1999

TAUZIN SLAMS FCC
full story online at Excite News
full story online at Nando.net

The top Republican in the House of Representatives overseeing communications policy Thursday blasted a plan to allow thousands of new low-powered radio stations.

Rep. Billy Tauzin of Louisiana said the Federal Communications Commission plan for so-called microradio would reduce the audience and advertising revenue of current stations and possibly create severe interference.

The FCC "is an agency out of control that demands congressional action to straighten it out," Tauzin said at a luncheon meeting of the National Association of Broadcaster's group of top radio executives.

Tauzin chairs the House Commerce Committee's communications subcommittee.

The luncheon meeting, in a private dining room of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Arlington, Va., included billionaire Lowry Mays, co-founder of Clear Channel Communications Inc.

After also accusing the FCC of "coercion and extortion" when it reviewed industry merger deals, Tauzin said he planned to introduce legislation to revamp the agency's structure and powers.

"I will need your help, I will need your guidance and I will need your counsel," the lawmaker told the radio station owners.

Tauzin also said he would introduce a bill to repeal a provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act that subsidizes Internet connections for schools and libraries.

The education rate, or e-rate, discount is funded from fees added to long distance telephone calls. The program came under fire from some Republicans last year who dubbed it the "Al Gore tax."

Supporters of the plan said they were somewhat surprised by Tauzin's opposition.

"I would have thought that the FCC's use of the Communications Act to

end protectionism and permit the entry of hundreds or thousands of new businesses into the most dynamic and growing part of our economy is something Billy Tauzin would be pushing not stopping," said Andrew Schwartzman, president of the Media Access Project, a nonprofit law firm backing the microradio supporters.

"The NAB is just like a schoolyard bully: first time someone stands up to them they go running for their older brother."

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Copy: Nadine Strossen
New York Law School
57 Worth Street, New York, NY 10013-2960
(212) 431-2375; (212) 431-3295 (FAX)
nstrosse@counsel.com

Copy: People For the American Way
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036