

May 19, 1999

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Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
1919 M Street, Room 222 NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

MAY 25 1999

FCC MAIL ROOM

Paul R. Erickson
78 Oakdale Blvd.
Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069
P.R.Russell@ABC.com

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Re: Low Power FM (LPFM)
No: MM Docket 99-25

Kudos and encouragement to the F.C.C. for exploring the proposal to license low power FM stations. Please add my name to the list of citizens deeply concerned about the lack of diversity in radio programming in the aftermath of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Commercial radio broadcasting has been my profession for over thirty years. I am currently employed by ABC radio, WJR in Detroit. Prior to this job, I had spent nearly a decade as the morning program host on WQRS, Detroit's erstwhile classical music station. WQRS had served southeast Michigan for more than thirty-seven years without a change in format, before becoming caught in the feeding frenzy that resulted from "The Act of '96." After changing ownership five times in two years, WQRS as a classical station ceased to exist in November of 1997, joining countless classical outlets and other specialty formats which were essentially "vaporized" when the big fish swallowed all the minnows.

Since the demise of WQRS there has been a continuous outcry from thousands of former listeners, disenfranchised by the format change and left without a full-time classical station based in Detroit. Thousands of bumper stickers proclaim, "Detroit needs Classical Music Radio" and countless letters to the local papers repeat the theme.

Attempts have been made by various public and private organizations to purchase an existing FM license, or to buy brokered time on an existing station to broadcast the classics, but sadly the inflated cost of broadcast licenses brought on by T.C.A. '96 has made broadcasting prohibitively expensive for such "niche" formats as classical music. Ironically, in its days as a classical station, WQRS garnered a higher audience share than the (now defunct) format that replaced it, and a higher share than several of the other commercial stations now "serving" metro Detroit.

Obviously, there is still a great demand for an FM classical station in this market, and in other cities where the format has disappeared. It is my belief that a low power FM station, perhaps coupled with internet audio streaming, could provide a valuable service to many of the listeners left "homeless" in Detroit.

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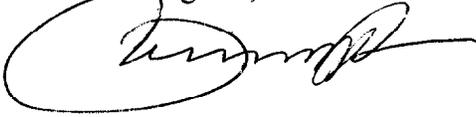
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It is my dream that as a broadcast professional, I might be able to provide the classical music radio station that so many people desire in this city. A low power FM could provide that service without significantly interfering with existing stations.

It is my sincere hope that the F.C.C. will continue to vigorously pursue the creation of low power FM licenses. I believe that the proposal, if passed, would create excellent opportunities for voices now missing from the airwaves to be once again heard in communities across America. This is much needed legislation. Congratulations again for proposing it. Don't Quit!

I will continue to monitor the F.C.C.'s web site and anxiously await the day when you begin taking license applications. I hope mine will be one of the first you consider.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul R. Erickson", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Paul R. Erickson
P.R.Russell@ABC.com