

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	MM Docket No. 99-25
)	
Creation of a Low)	
Power Radio Service)	RM-9208
)	RM-9242
)	

COMMENTS OF CHRISTOPHER T. BYDALEK

I urge the Commission to adopt rules for noncommercial low power FM radio stations for up to 250 watts. I also fully support the comments and views of the Committee on Democratic Communications (CDC) in this matter and urge the Commission to adopt their recommendations in this matter.

It is absolutely necessary to add even stronger language regarding the ownership of these proposed licenses.

The Commission should adopt strict limitations as to who can own and operate a Low Power FM station. One license per individual, non-transferable, with the licensee required to live within a certain distance of the studio. Program content should be at least 66% locally produced and originated. And most importantly, AMNESTY for alleged "pirate" operators who wish to obtain a license should be granted. Although I applaud Chairman Kennard, the Commissioners, and FCC staff who have worked hard to bring LPFM where it is today, those individuals and groups who've asserted their First Amendment right to free speech through peaceful civil disobedience should absolutely be given a chance to operate a LPFM station.

Both commercial and public radio have become the tools of the large corporate interests whose only motivation is to make money. Public radio especially, has suffered from increased pressure from the Corporate for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and NPR (National Public Radio) to make their operations more "professional" by changing the funding formulas which stations must abide by in order to receive funding and programming from these respective groups. This is especially true here in Alaska, where the smaller, once fully-staffed stations have literally been turned into repeaters of the larger regional stations. What results is less local coverage of news and events and more emphasis on satellite-fed national programming which usually has little to do with the day to day lives of rural Alaskans.

What's needed to keep community orientated radio alive is a bottom-up grassroots approach towards creating locally based, non-governmental, low cost, community access radio, rather than the top-down models which are being imposed by the likes of CPB, NPR and here in Alaska, the APRN (Alaska Public Radio Network). Witness the turmoil that is taking place with the Pacifica Network and you can see why many have become disillusioned with "public" broadcasting. If anything, "public" broadcasting is an oxymoron anymore; if you're not part of the elite class of individuals privileged to be part of the "in" crowd, then there is very little hope that you'll ever partake in "community" broadcasting if you should so desire. After 13 years as a volunteer at my local public radio station, this is exactly what I've witnessed take place. Non-broadcasters appointing themselves from the board of directors, firing dedicated staff and personnel, and then hiring friends and out of state consultants to do what was formerly done by long time staff and volunteers. And although my local public radio station has been running about a \$250,000 debt for the last three years, they still find the money to pay their General Manager \$80,000 a year. This is absurd and does not in any way shape or form, represent what community orientated broadcasting is all about.

I urge the Commissioners to closely look at the work of REC Networks, the CDC, Amherst Alliance, the CRC, ARD, Radio4All and other grass roots organizations who have worked hard to prove both technically, AND politically that LPFM is a force to be reckoned with. Although we may not have the money and resources, not to mention the access to power that the NAB, CPB and NPR have, the actions of thousands of civilly disobedient individuals have proven that low power FM broadcasting is not going to go away any time soon. Receiver and transmitter technology has made quantum changes in the last ten years. Now is the time to change the regulations to acknowledge this.

Thank you for time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

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