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The Matter of Creation of a Low Power Radio Service - MM Docket No. 99-25.

To: The Honorable William E. Kennard Chairman,  
Commissioner Gloria Tristani,  
Commissioner Michael Powell  
Commissioner Susan Ness  
Commissioner Harold Furchgott-Roth  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals 455 Twelfth Street S.W. Washington, DC 20554

Dear FCC Commissioners,

8/2/99

As an active participant in community-based media production for over ten years, I have appreciated some of the positions this FCC has taken in recent years. You've stood up to NAB on microradio, something no other FCC commissioners dared to consider, much less do. It's also clear that many Congressmen are going to try and browbeat a reversal on this issue to earn their keep with the broadcasting PAC's. Of course, you must have anticipated that too. Nonetheless you also have to appreciate that the thousands of individuals who began serving their communities with unlicensed radio stations may be a bit wary of your good intentions since the FCC Enforcement Office has shut them down and silenced the voices within their communities

Within the media communities that I work, there is much disappointment with the present form of the FCC Low Power Radio Proposal which seems to have missed the point (and spirit) of what community media via microradio is all about. Firstly, it must be **non-commercial** - it should serve no interest other than furthering local culture and democratic discourses within communities. Secondly, it needs to be **locally owned and operated** by those of the community in which it serves and ownership must be limited to a single license. Thirdly, it should actually be **low power**, limited to less than 200 watts for urban communities and with the LP1000 watt class reserved for rural communities.

Microradio operators have demonstrated that low power broadcasting can be done efficiently and without interfering with adjoining bands. NAB and NPR will vehemently argue the opposite, an acknowledgment that they are cloaking their positions in purely technical terms. Commercial media operators fear competition, but most of all they fear competition that does not seek to compete on their terms. If the commercial media operators were interested in encouraging a free and open public discourse that is the purest expression of democratic dialogue, then they could fear competition with non-commercial community media operators. Instead, commercial media operators view community through a distorted lens of market demographics, advertising revenues and monopolistic business practices. They promote blind consumption not democratic practices, and they have leveraged the medium of radio right out of the community it was originally meant to serve. Now they fear losing listeners to a format they no longer understand and cannot produce within their new downscaled business models. We need a true non-profit based, noncommercial form of community radio in this country, it been missing far too long, some would say forever. What we don't need are hundreds of Capstar Lite stations or neighborhood WalMart broadcasting outlets which is the likely outcome should Low Power Radio licenses be made available to commercial, for-profit corporations.

The eyes of many Americans are watchful of your decision on LPFM, we trust you will do the right thing.

sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Eisenmenger".

Michael Eisenmenger