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Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth St, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Comments regarding Docket Number 99-25

I am a commercial radio station owner and operator. I am pleased to have the opportunity to present my views to the Commission concerning the Low Power FM rulemaking. I am opposed to the rulemaking for a number of reasons, the most important of which are presented below.

Economic Considerations. While I understand that economics is not a primary concern of the commission, I respectfully request the Commission to at least consider the economic devastation that low power FM could bring to the business of broadcasting. Most licensees, at least those in small and medium markets, are small businesses. Many are family owned

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operations. Like it or not, the cost of acquisition of a radio station license is partially driven by the “franchise” that is derived from the Commission’s technical standards. When individuals determine the purchase price of an acquired station that franchise is a major element. The acquisition cost must be factored into the operating budget of the station. When the playing field is shifted by a major Commission action such as this, the economic stability of the industry for the current owners becomes fragile. Operators who have served their communities faithfully for years are disadvantaged because individuals who acquire the new licenses pay virtually nothing for market entry while existing operators continue to have the burden of acquisition cost. Our industry has been through one expansion in the form of docket 80-90. That rulemaking was undertaken, as I understand it, in the name of diversification on the commercial radio spectrum. That action, while well intentioned, served to increase interference. It also increased the number of stations competing for the same dollars in many markets. The obvious results was that many of the drop-ins became economically unviable forcing their acquisition by other stations. The capital outlay for this national endeavor was millions (billions?) of dollars – some of which could have been spent on programming services had the acquisition not been necessary. In fairness, I am aware that some in the broadcast

industry supported some elements of Docket 89-90, but I think that it is an experiment that does not bear repeating.

Many voices: While it is understood that proponents of low Power FM wish to provide a diversification of voices and opinions, what guarantee is there that this will actually happen? Operating a station can become a pretty disheartening occupation when there is little or no revenue. New licensees would have to produce revenue eventually. Advertising is the traditional and tested method, but in order to gain advertising revenue, one first has to gain listeners – i.e. mass appeal is required. If proponents of this policy are dissatisfied with what is currently available, I submit to them that there would be much more of same very shortly after adoption of low Power FM.

Enforcement With separation and interference rules greatly diminished, the new licensees would have to particularly careful to operate within the parameters of their licenses. Would this really happen? One hundred watts is nice, but its not 10000 or even 1000. 100% modulation is the rule, but more is often better – especially with a station perceived to be one of inferior signal level by its owner who may be trying to maximize coverage. My question is this: who will enforce the rules? It my observation that the

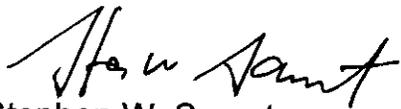
Commission does not have the will or the means to enforce the current rules. Who then will oversee the hundreds or thousands of new stations coming on the air? Who will insure that even the new, relaxed interference standards will be met?

Is there a need? I can understand the concern expressed by some that there may be little radio diversity in some markets due to consolidation. But please remember that radio does not operate in a vacuum. There are countless voices and opinions available in even the smallest of markets. Radio, TV, cable, satellite, newspaper and print publications of all kinds are but a few of the media sources available to almost every American. I would also like to point out that most radio operators do a good job of presenting varying opinion within their means to do so. And in the aggregate, radio certainly is doing a fine job of presenting the political fabric of the country.

In summary, I sincerely feel that low Power FM would significantly and negatively impact an already distressed industry. I also feel that the intent of LPFM proponents would almost certainly never be met since it is probably impossible for the Commission to regulate program content. The

net result would be significantly more radio stations doing pretty much the same thing and doing it worse since there would probably not be much more advertising revenue available in any given market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen W. Samet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Stephen W. Samet
Owner/Manager
WZOE AM-FM WRVY