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Jonas R. Bridges
President & General Manager

April 7, 1999

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

Attention: Chairman

Re: Proposal of Low Power FM Radio Service

Dear Sir,

For the record, I would like to comment on the proposal of low power FM radio service. I can think of nothing that would be more detrimental to small market AM radio operators such as myself. I speak as one who has been out in the field tilling the soil for 45-years and I shall explain the problems this new proposal would cause as we move along. I understand the FCC has received over 13,000 inquires concerning this. I suggest to you, all this is an organized effort by a few religious leaders to band together for a nationwide network for their own agenda... plus a bunch of renegades who want to open up the air waves to "shock" radio with odd-ball stuff featuring music and monologue that no person with a decent and rational mind would care for. There are thousands of radio stations already on the air available for these people at most reasonable rates.

If the FCC is to consider a low power FM service at all, it should be for the benefit of small market AM daytimers such as myself. I signed WKMT-AM on the air March 12, 1953...1kw in a small town and I have made every effort to be a good steward of the 1220khz frequency. We have served the community to the fullest while doing enough business to make a very modest living. During the ensuing 45-years, the retail part of the town has almost totally closed up due to shopping centers, malls and Wal-Mart in larger neighboring cities. I am sure I need not explain what this did to the advertising revenue.

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NBC Radio Network

We re-directed our efforts to try to survive by making our facilities available to any and all people and/or organizations that would like the opportunity to broadcast their message or promote their cause. Not that our facilities weren't available before, we have tried harder to create a reason for minorities, etc. to broadcast from our station.

Small markets with a single radio station such as mine are in desperate need of a low power FM service. You see, we are permitted to operate at night with 150 watts of power on the AM dial which covers a radius of a little more than one-mile, and yet we try to broadcast local high school sports and other local programs that are extremely important to the community. The neighboring towns such as Shelby and Gastonia had FM stations but the owners sold them for mega-bucks and they were moved to the BIG City of Charlotte. Little WKMT-AM has never had a "sister FM" station and has never had any appreciable night time service.

We would love to have a kilowatt (more or less) FM radio station to enhance our effort of community-oriented broadcasting. At present, we have just about every religious organization in our community represented with a broadcast, and this includes all races. We even have a two-hour program each week with the spoken word in Spanish. This is directed to the migrant farm and other workers with the message of staying legal, saying "no" to drugs, etc. We broadcast "live" all city council meetings in order that the locals can know what their government is doing. WKMT-AM Radio also broadcasts a two-hour program three times a week called "Hometown Talent" featuring local talent who may or may not ever be heard of again, but we give them the exposure. This should give you some idea of just how hard we are working for the people in our coverage area. Do we need another two or three micro-radio stations to muddy the water?

I am certain there are hundreds of other small market daytime AM stations in the same situation as I. These stations are open and available to any and all people and organizations for any purpose that is legal and moral. Therefore, I submit to the Federal Communications Commission, there is no need for thousands of low power FM radio stations for ANY purpose. There is a need for a few low power FM stations to compliment AM daytimers such as WKMT that would give a decent night time service for a local community. I feel like a lone voice crying in the wilderness. I know from where I speak as I have been doing this for 45-years in the same location.

Your proposal as it now stands, to open up thousands of low power frequencies on either of the radio bands, would be totally devastating to small market stations.

In fact, it would put me completely out of business, as it takes all the imagination and innovation we can muster to keep the bills paid for reasons already stated; i.e., with all retail business going to malls and shopping centers in larger neighboring towns. I hope you will consider my comments in a positive manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonas R. Bridges". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jonas R. Bridges
Owner
WKMT-AM Radio

C: North Carolina Association of Broadcasters
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