

My suggestions for the conversion to digital broadcasting and the allowance of low power FM licences is as follows:

The time to convert to digital broadcasting is now. The FCC should immediately impliment guidelines for this to be the standard. There are receiver and transmitter manufacturers eagerly awaiting this conversion which stands to provide banner sales. As has been the case with Canada, U.K. and Germany leading the way already with digital radio, the United States needs to step to the forefront.

The FCC should cease issuing any new high power FM licences. The same holds true for any FM repeater licence. All future licences should be LPFM. (1000 watt [rural], 100watt [urban] and 10 watts [for special events and community religious broadcasts]) Those existing stations with the higher powered licences should be grandfathered in.

A three year conversion (target: 2003) should be manditory. Automobile manufacturers should be notified that starting with their 2001 model year vehicles, they must be equipted with a radios that receive both standards(or solely digital if that is the customer's preference).

Existing FM broadcast stations should NOT be allowed to run simultaneous standards, but rather, when they feel the market is favorable, do a full conversion at that time. LPFM stations should enter the market utilising digital transmission. Those individuals and non-profit organizations who successfully bid on frequencies, should be given more time than the allotted eighteen months to broadcast until an abundance of low powered digital transmitters are available. Corporations should not be allowed to own a LPFM licence.

Looking at the consumer side, the costs for lower income to purchase digital receivers should not be prohibitive. Especially with a massive migration within a three year period, the laws of supply and demand should be favorable for the customer. Digital receivers in Canada and Germany are not that expensive. A conversion to new standard, based on a vastly superior current technology should never be precluded for this reason. I would, however, suggest that a portion of the revenue garnered from allowing full use of the FM spectrum through competitive bidding, be used to help charitable organizations financially help our sightless citizens with the ability to buy digital receivers for their use.