

SONNY CALLAHAN
First District, Alabama

ORIGINAL

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COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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Washington, DC 20515-0101

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ASSISTANT WHIP

*Mrb
low power*

Ms. Sheryl Wilkerson
Director
Federal Communications Comm.
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20554-0001

RE: Mr. Jonathan Adler
WHIL Radio Reading Service
Mobile, AL 36689

RECEIVED

MAY 01 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Ms. Wilkerson:

The attached communication is submitted for your consideration.

If you will advise me of your action in this matter and have the letter returned to me with your reply, I will appreciate it.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Sonny Callahan
Member of Congress

SC:kw

Enclosure

PLEASE RESPOND TO: CONGRESSMAN SONNY CALLAHAN
1141 MONTLIMAR DRIVE
SUITE 3010
MOBILE, AL 36609

ATTN: KAY WILLIAMS
E-mail: kay.williams@mail.house.gov

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WHIL-RADIO READING SERVICE
P.O. Box 8509
Mobile, Alabama 36689-0509

February 29, 2000

The Honorable Sonny Callahan
2466 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0104

RE: Low Power FM authorizations

Dear Congressman Callahan:

I am writing to you in the hope that you will help. I am manager of a reading service for the blind operating on a subcarrier of public radio station WHIL-FM. The service is called WHIL-Radio Reading Service and currently reaches most of southwest Alabama. Our services (and those of others operating elsewhere in Alabama) could be dramatically and negatively impacted by the appearance of low power FM stations in the area we serve.

Even with the 1st and 2nd adjacent channel spaces protected our major concern is that the introduction of a low power FM station in remote (outside the primary radio contour) areas is highly possible under the new regulations and this means blind individuals will be cut off from our Radio Reading Service. Our subcarrier receivers will be overloaded by the signal of the new LPFM station.

The root of the problem is that the broadcast area outside of the primary coverage range for WHIL is not protected in the new LPFM rules. For some listeners, WHIL-Radio Reading Service is the only access they have to newspapers and other current print. They are elderly, blind, and live alone on a low, fixed income. The WHIL-Radio Reading Service operates on a tiny budget and does not have the ability to reach them through other, more expensive means.

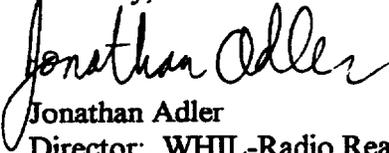
There are some workable solutions to these unintended interference problems.

- a) The FCC could conduct field studies on subcarrier reception in the grade "B" contour prior to issuing LPFM licenses.
- b) Streamlined interference resolution procedures should be established between the FCC and subcarrier services that will ensure blind and disabled listeners do not go for months without service while standard procedures are implemented.
- c) In areas where a reading service on the radio is currently provided, extend the protections throughout the secondary contour of the main channel.
- d) Conduct additional engineering studies. Fieldwork could help identify more of the

potentially disastrous losses of service when adding low power services to an area. There may be other technical and policy solutions to resolve the unintended consequences of LPFM. Whatever the final outcome, it is vital that this FCC action to allow for more voices on the airwaves does not silence the critical lifeline currently provided by subcarrier reading services.

Finally, these concerns are not just local to the Mobile market. The WHIL-Radio Reading Service is but one of more than 100 services combating the isolation of blind and elderly disabled people nationally. Please share this information with your colleagues on the Commerce Committee. I am happy to help work with your staff and the FCC in any manner feasible. Please ask the FCC not to proceed in licensing low power FM stations until more of the effects are known and addressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Adler".

Jonathan Adler
Director: WHIL-Radio Reading Service
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FAX: 334-460-2189
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