Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 112th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Creation of A Low Power Radio Service (MM Docket No. 99-25) and Amendment of Service and Eligibility rules for FM Broadcast Translator Stations (MB Docket No. 07-172)

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We are pleased that the Commission is moving forward to implement the Local Community Radio Act, legislation enacted last December to expand licensing of low-power FM (LPFM) radio stations in communities nationwide. By making space on the dial in the largest radio markets for new LPFM stations, as the law requires, the Commission will facilitate the creation of hundreds, or even thousands, of new radio stations that will provide locally-originated programming in many cities and towns around the country.

As original sponsors of the Local Community Radio Act, we commend the Commission for the completion of a market-by-market examination of spectrum occupancy in the top 150 radio markets to determine available space for new LPFM stations. The Commission must weigh many legitimate, yet sometimes conflicting, interests in the implementation of this law, so we are especially pleased to see the Commission take such a careful and balanced approach.

In particular, we believe the Commission's proposal for a "market test" to determine whether the pending translator applications in each market would allow sufficient space for a given number of LPFM stations is a fair solution to this difficult balancing task. While ensuring sufficient spectrum for LPFM stations in more congested radio markets, this mechanism also provides for the rapid licensing of new translators in markets where such licensing would not unduly preclude new LPFM stations. Through this method, the Commission strikes a fair balance in meeting the requirements of the law, serving the public interest by generating locally originated programming, and addressing the interests of translator applicants.

We emphasize that Section 5 of the Local Community Radio Act requires the Commission to "ensure that licenses are available to … low-power FM stations" as well as translators and booster stations. This provision was carefully negotiated by its sponsors and many interested parties to strike a balance among competing interests. This language does not leave the Commission free to process translator applications to the exclusion of LPFM stations. For this reason, we support the Commission's proposal because it takes into account the needs of

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translator applicants and the needs of the many community groups, schools, and churches who have waited for over ten years to start low power radio stations.

Given the immense community benefits provided by existing LPFM stations to the localities they serve, as outlined in the Commission's recently released report entitled "The Information Needs of Communities," we encourage the Commission to give close consideration to the potential benefits of new LPFM stations in preserving and promoting local news and public affairs, religious, minority, public safety, and other programming. At a time of particular difficulty in the journalism industry, the expansion of LPFM will greatly contribute to the richness of local public dialogue and will enhance opportunities for citizens to participate in local civic affairs.

We urge the Commission to continue using all its regulatory and technical resources to authorize as many licenses for LPFM stations as possible as the agency moves forward in its rulemaking process.

Sincerely,

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Lee Terry
Member of Congress

Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator

John McCain
U.S. Senator

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn