

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
Cross-Ownership of Broadcast Stations) MM Docket No. 01-235
and Newspapers)
Newspaper/Radio Cross-Ownership) MM Docket No. 96-197
Waiver Policy)

ORDER

Adopted: December 14, 2001

Released: December 14, 2001

By the Chief, Mass Media Bureau:

1. On December 12, 2001, pursuant to section 1.46 of the Commission's Rules, the AFL-CIO, Center for Digital Democracy, Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Media Alliance, National Organization for Women, and Office of Communication of United Church of Christ (hereafter, "petitioners") filed a "Request for Extension of Time to File Reply Comments" in this proceeding. The current deadline to file reply comments is January 7, 2002; petitioners request the Commission to extend the deadline until February 15, 2002. Among other things, petitioners cite the volume and complexity of the record in this proceeding, and the pendency of various other proceedings in which they intend to participate, as reasons for their request. The petitioners claim that granting their requested extension will not prejudice this proceeding, and suggest that denying it could disadvantage them in particular. For planning purposes, petitioners ask the Commission to rule on their request by December 18, 2001.

2. On December 14, 2001, the Newspaper Association of America (hereafter, "NAA") filed an "Opposition to Request for Extension of Time." NAA contends that review of the newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership rule is long overdue, and that the petitioners' requested extension is excessive and will unnecessarily delay this proceeding.

3. While we appreciate NAA's concerns, we believe that the public interest would be best served by granting petitioners' request. To date, nearly 1500 commenters have filed in this proceeding. Some of these comments are extensive, with detailed factual allegations, legal arguments, policy proposals, and supporting studies. NAA has not explained how or why a delay of approximately one month would harm its members. Given these circumstances, we believe that additional time would assist petitioners and other members of the public alike in preparing comprehensive responses, which in turn will help the Commission in its decision-making and resolving the complex and significant public policy

1 47 C.F.R. § 1.46.

2 Request at 1-2.

3 Id. at 2-3.

4 Id. at 3.

5 Opposition at 1-3.

issues raised in this proceeding.

4. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that petitioners' Request for Extension of Time to File Reply Comments is GRANTED.

5. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the reply comment deadline in this proceeding is EXTENDED to February 15, 2002.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Roy J. Stewart
Chief, Mass Media Bureau