



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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Media Bureau Extends Filing Deadlines for Comments on Media Ownership Studies

MB Docket No. 06-121

(MB Docket Nos. 02-277, 04-228, MM Docket Nos. 01-235, 01-317, 00-244)

Revised Comment Date: October 22, 2007

Revised Reply Comment Date: November 1, 2007

On July 24, 2006, the Commission released a *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* initiating a comprehensive quadrennial review of its media ownership rules,¹ as required by Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as amended.² On July 31, 2007, the Commission released and sought comment on ten research studies designed to inform its decisions in the quadrennial review proceeding.³ The studies, which were conducted by outside researchers and Commission staff, examine a range of issues that impact diversity, competition, and localism, the touchstone policies of the media ownership rules. In addition to providing basic information, including the authors' names and professional affiliations and brief descriptions of each study, the *Research Studies Public Notice* identified the page on the Commission's website where the studies, in their entirety, are available to the public for review. The current deadlines for filing comments and reply comments are October 1, 2007, and October 16, 2007, respectively.

On September 11, 2007, Free Press, Consumer Federation of America, and Consumer Union (collectively, "Free Press") filed a joint request for an extension of time to file comments on the media ownership studies.⁴ Free Press is seeking an additional 90 days from the date that the Commission provided access to the underlying data to file comments.⁵ Free Press asserts that additional time is needed in order to analyze, test, and reproduce the scientific studies, which it notes contain "thousands to millions

¹ 2006 *Quadrennial Regulatory Review – Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 21 FCC Rcd 8834 (2006).

² Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56, § 202 (1996); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-199, § 629, 118 Stat. 3 (2004) (amending Sections 202(c) and 202(h) of the 1996 Act).

³ Public Notice, FCC Seeks Comment on Research Studies on Media Ownership, DA 07-3470, MB Docket No. 06-121 (rel. July 31, 2007) (the "*Research Studies Public Notice*").

⁴ Motion for Extension of Time, filed by Free Press, Consumer Federation of America, and Consumers Union, MB Docket No. 06-121 (filed Sep. 11, 2007) at 2.

⁵ *Id.* While Free Press acknowledges that the Commission made available underlying data on September 6, 2007, it states that it remains in discussions with staff regarding the terms and availability of the data. Therefore, it seeks a 90-day extension from the date when all of its issues have been resolved. *Id.*

of data points and methodological decisions.”⁶ The Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc., the National Organization for Women, Common Cause, and the Benton Foundation (collectively, “UCC”) also jointly request additional time to file comments in response to the studies.⁷ In addition to supporting Free Press’ request, UCC notes that it needs additional time to file comments because it is filing comments in response to the *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in this proceeding,⁸ and participating in other Commission proceedings for which comments are due in the same time frame.⁹ As an alternative to extending the filing deadlines, UCC requests that the Commission issue another further notice of proposed rulemaking to detail any proposed changes to the media ownership rules and explain how it intends to rely on the studies in its Report and Order.¹⁰ Media General opposes the requests for an extension of time, asserting that neither of the parties advanced sufficient reasons to delay the established comment period.¹¹

While we agree with Media General that undue delays in this proceeding should be avoided when possible, here we find that a brief extension of the filing deadlines is warranted. We believe that the public interest and our goal of assembling a full record in this proceeding would be best served by granting an extension of the comment and reply comment filing deadlines so that parties will have additional time to review the studies and underlying data. We recognize that there is a large amount of material to be reviewed and that some parties may need additional time to complete their review and analysis.¹²

Accordingly, the new deadline for filing comments is October 22, 2007, and the new deadline for filing reply comments is November 1, 2007.

For further information, contact Kristi Thompson at (202) 418-1318 of the Media Bureau. Press inquiries should be directed to Mary Diamond, Media Bureau, at (202) 418-2388. TTY: (202) 418-7172 or (888) 835-5322.

By the Chief, Media Bureau

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⁶ Free Press Extension Request at 3.

⁷ Motion for Issuance of a Further Notice, or in the Alternative, an Extension of Time to Comment on Studies filed by the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc., the National Organization for Women, Common Cause, and the Benton Foundation, MB Docket No. 06-121 (filed Sep. 18, 2007).

⁸ *2006 Quadrennial Regulatory Review – Review of the Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 21 FCC Rcd 8834 (2006).

⁹ Free Press Extension Request at 5.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 3-4.

¹¹ Opposition to Motions for Extension of Time, filed by Media General, Inc., MB Docket No. 06-121 (filed Sep. 21, 2007).

¹² We note that Free Press concurrently filed a complaint under the Data Quality Act with regard to the media ownership studies. We will address any substantive issues raised by Free Press in the context of the media ownership proceeding.