



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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LOCATION SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON BROADCAST OWNERSHIP RULES ***Greater Richmond Convention Center to be Locale for February 27 Field Hearing***

Washington, DC – As announced on January 23, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will hold a one-day field hearing on Thursday, February 27, 2003, in Richmond, Virginia, to facilitate participation by the general public in its review of broadcast ownership regulation. The Commission is now announcing that the hearing will be held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, 403 N. Third Street, Ballroom Building, Level 1, Meeting Room 15AB. The hearing will be from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

The purpose of the hearing is to give the general public another opportunity to voice its opinions about broadcast ownership rules. The FCC's goal is to promote competition, diversity and localism in the media. Recent court decisions reversing FCC ownership rules have emphasized that any limits must be based on a solid factual record, not on predictive judgments alone. In late 2001, FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell created the Media Ownership Working Group and tasked it with developing a solid factual foundation for re-evaluating FCC media ownership policies.

The FCC is asking the public to offer comments on how the agency can develop broadcast ownership rules that provide citizens with viewpoints from a diversity of sources and enhance the marketplace of ideas. The FCC said that the public will benefit from rules that reflect the modern media environment and are able to withstand future judicial scrutiny.

Chairman Powell, in his December 4, 2002, announcement of the public hearing, said that the FCC had chosen Richmond as a location so it could hear from citizens of a mid-sized city. Chairman Powell said the information gathered at this hearing would supplement commentary from the FCC media ownership roundtable held in October 2001 and the extensive record that has already been accumulated.

In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress required the FCC to review its media ownership rules, many of which were adopted decades ago, to determine "whether any of such rules are necessary in the public interest as a result of competition." In 2001, the FCC began rulemaking proceedings on two of its broadcast ownership rules – the Newspaper/Broadcast Cross-Ownership Rule and the Local Radio Ownership Rule. In September 2002, the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) asking for public comment on its four other broadcast ownership rules, and consolidated all three proceedings into a single Biennial Review.

Two of these six rules have been remanded to the FCC by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The six rules and the year they originally were adopted are:

1. **Newspaper/Broadcast Cross-Ownership Prohibition (1975)**
2. **Local Radio Ownership (1941)**
3. **National TV Ownership (1941):** remanded by D.C. Circuit
4. **Local TV Multiple Ownership, aka “Duopoly rule” (1964):** remanded by D.C. Circuit
5. **Radio/TV Cross-Ownership Restriction (1970)**
6. **Dual Television Network Rule (1946)**

An agenda for the hearing will be released in the near future.

The hearing is open to the public and seating will be available on a first come, first served basis. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Requests for reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities should be made by sending an e-mail to: fcc504@fcc.gov. Include a description of the accommodation you will need including as much detail as you can. Also include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Make your request as early as possible; please allow at least 5 days advance notice. Last minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fill. Contact the following Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau staff: for sign language interpreters, CART, and other reasonable accommodations, contact Helen Chang, 202-418-0424 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY), hchang@fcc.gov; for accessible format materials (braille, large print, electronic files, and audio format) contact Brian Millin, 202-418-7426 (voice), 202-418-7365 (TTY), bmillin@fcc.gov.

Interested members of the public may also participate in this proceeding by filing comments electronically using the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) and ECFS Express at www.fcc.gov.

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For further information, contact Amelia Brown (202) 418-1400.

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