



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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COMMISSIONER COPPS'S STATEMENT ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Commissioner Michael J. Copps stated today that the Commission can and must take the following five steps before any further loosening of its existing media ownership rules:

1. Act on the numerous minority ownership proposals by the FCC's own Diversity Committee and the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) – many dating from 2002-2004 – that were only recently put out for comment in the media ownership docket.
 - In *Prometheus*, the Third Circuit took the Commission to task for failing to consider the impact of potential rule changes on minority media ownership. The Court also faulted the Commission for sidelining MMTC's proposals for advancing minority and disadvantaged businesses and directed that “[t]he Commission’s rulemaking process in response to our remand order should address these proposals at the same time.”
 - “Before we let big media corporations extend their hold on the public airwaves, we must heed the court’s direction and take affirmative steps so that minorities, women and small businesses have a fighting chance to be part of the broadcasting industry too,” Copps said.
2. Complete the 2004 proceeding on Broadcast Localism examining whether broadcasters are serving the needs and interests of their communities and the adequacy of the FCC’s license renewal process for ensuring compliance. “Completing the proceeding” means issuing a thorough Commission-level report with specific recommendations on how to put teeth into the FCC’s broadcast license renewal process and reinvigorate the public interest standard, as well as issuing any additional notices of proposed rulemakings that are necessary.
 - “We should not allow media corporations to acquire new licenses or renew existing ones until we know that every licensee will actually use the public airwaves to serve the public interest,” Copps remarked.
3. Put any set of proposed new ownership rules out for public comment before voting on them.

- “These are the public’s airwaves and the public has a right to know what the Commission is planning to do with them *before* final rules are adopted. The Court chastised the FCC for faulty procedures like this in 2003 when the Commission unwisely approved Chairman Powell’s proposed loosening of the rules,” Copps said.
4. Fully address the process concerns raised by Congress and others, including questions raised regarding the development, issuance, suppression, and peer review of economic studies.
 - “The integrity of the process must be beyond reproach. Questions raised about the current process threaten to taint it in ways similar to the 2003 debacle. These issues are too important to be influenced by political agendas or high-priced lobbying,” Copps stated.
 5. Address the media ownership rules comprehensively, not piecemeal.
 - “The media ownership rules constitute a single ecosystem. We cannot responsibly make changes in one area without considering the systemic impact. I’m on the look-out for any attempts to short-circuit the process,” Copps concluded.