

**Statement of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate  
Localism Hearing  
Washington, D.C.  
October 31, 2007**

Today we come to the last of our six localism hearings and we welcome all of you to the FCC today. Thank you to those who have taken time to participate, to our esteemed panelists and to you, the public. I look forward to hearing your thoughts. Since October 2003, the FCC has held hearings all across the country. The process actually started before I arrived at the FCC, and has continued throughout my tenure. From Monterrey, California to Portland, Maine - literally from sea to shining sea - we have heard from hundreds of American citizens on this important issue. While the debate is often passionate, I think there is one thing we can all agree on – the importance of local news and local information to every citizen, to every one of us, in every corner of America.

It is the local news outlets that know our communities best. They provide the types of information on which local citizens rely—local weather and traffic, high school football scores, community events, school programs, local political races, the list could go on and on. They are also the first-responders in times of crisis. Whether crime, weather disasters, or public health emergencies, local news outlets are often the first to communicate

critical information to the public. Growing up in a small town, Murfreesboro, TN, I saw first-hand the importance of localism in a small market, listening to WGNS every morning on the way to school—local owners, local news, local agricultural prices, local births and deaths--- precisely what you still hear today when you visit the station.

Localism refers to the responsiveness of a broadcast station to the needs and problems of the residents of its community. The Supreme Court, in Turner Broadcasting v. FCC, referred to localism as “the dissemination of opinions held by the listeners' neighbors” or “the reporting of events that have to do with the local community.” In my home state of Tennessee, we have many rural areas, where local news and information is particularly important. In these rural areas, local news outlets are struggling to survive. Therefore, we must also keep in mind how we can set the appropriate rules that allow them to continue to serve the local interests of their communities.

Today’s hearing will review all of the information we have gleaned from our previous hearings, and attempts to analyze the findings. I am glad we have taken such a thorough, lengthy and measured approach to this process. Now, it is time for us to get down to work and I look forward to joining my colleagues in crafting rules that recognize the global nature of the

world in which we live today, while meeting our commitment to localism.

Thank you.