

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

May 24, 2011

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The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I urge you to support the efforts of Entravision Holdings, LLC, to relocate Station WJAL from Hagerstown, Maryland to Silver Spring, Maryland. Entravision has sought permission for the move through a rulemaking request pending at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The move would accomplish laudable objectives: Silver Spring would have its first broadcast television station and the Washington metropolitan area, including the Maryland suburbs, would have a second full-service Spanish-language broadcast service.

Entravision currently operates Class A Television Station WMDO-CA in the Washington area, where it broadcasts the programming of the Telefutura Spanish-language network. For many years, WMDO-CA operated on Channel 30. This low-power facility was forced off its channel by a full-power station transitioning to digital broadcasting. Following its displacement, WMDO-CA relocated to Channel 47, but with a substantial net loss to its service area, dropping from 2,014,567 potential viewers to 1,139,076 – nearly a 45 percent decline. Because its signal is limited, its over-the-air reach does not extend far from the tower site in Northwest Washington. Consequently, Maryland residents in adjacent suburban counties cannot view it on their television sets.

Entravision also operates Station WJAL, from studios in Hagerstown. Entravision has been trying since 2003 to convince FCC officials that moving WJAL to Silver Spring would be in the public interest since it would increase Spanish-language programming available over-the-air in the Washington metropolitan area. Moreover, this change in the transmitter site will result in the delivery of a “good quality” signal to more cable television system “headends” in the D.C. area, resulting in expanded cable carriage of Spanish-language programming to those Washington-area viewers who depend on cable television for local signals. At present, some cable operators refuse to carry WMDO-CA because of the poor quality of its signal. The proposed relocation will not leave Hagerstown unserved or underserved since there are other TV stations licensed to and serving Hagerstown.

Reply To: *Entravision Holdings, LLC, et al., Petition for Rulemaking, FCC Docket #10-100, et al.*

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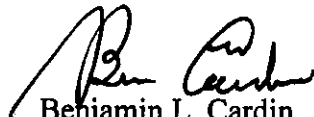
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I agree with Hispanic leaders and elected officials who have contacted me that the rulemaking request before the FCC would benefit not only Entravision but the broader public interest. The Washington area is one of the few metropolitan areas in this country with a sizeable Hispanic population that does not have at least two full-service Spanish-language stations serving the Latino community. Entravision, which is a prominent Spanish-language broadcaster, has pledged to provide such a second Spanish-language service, with its attendant local news, sports, and public affairs components, if WJAL is allowed to relocate to Silver Spring. According to the most recent decennial Census, the Washington metropolitan area and Montgomery County have experienced more than a 60 percent increase in their Latino populations over the past ten years. Montgomery County's Latino population has reached 17 percent of the total and continues to grow. This population, which relies heavily on over-the-air television, deserves more than one satisfactory broadcast signal. The status quo is no longer acceptable.

I urge the FCC to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking promptly, solicit comments from the public and other interested parties on the proposal put forward by Entravision, and give such comments due consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If I can provide you with any additional information, please call upon me or have your staff contact Gray Maxwell (gray_maxwell@cardin.senate.gov) on my staff.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

BLC: dgm