

September 26, 2013

Statement of FCC Acting Chairwoman Mignon L. Clyburn

Re: LPFM Implementation Report, Creation of a Low Power Radio Service, MM Docket 99-25

This is a very exciting moment. We are poised for a dramatic and historic explosion of diverse local voices on the radio band. I, for one, can't wait!

Once again I extend special thanks to Congressman Michael Doyle and Congressman Lee Terry, as well as to Senator Maria Cantwell and Senator John McCain, the sponsors of the Local Community Radio Act of 2010. Without their leadership today's report and the nearing LPFM window would not be possible.

It also has been rewarding to work with my colleagues over the past several years in implementing the LCRA in a fair, thoughtful, and responsible way. I thank them for leading us toward this next LPFM window. In particular I want to salute the efforts of former Commissioner Michael Copps who was and remains a fierce champion for media localism, diversity, and competition.

While we have done so much we have so much more to do. We don't know today whether a thousand or tens of thousands of applications will be filed in the October LPFM window but we must be prepared either way. I thank the Media Bureau for its ongoing outreach efforts and its commitment to make this window a success. And I thank them in advance for devoting their best efforts to scaling the mountain of licensing work that looms ahead.

I am sure that the results of this work and this window will richly reward all our efforts. As I have travelled this country I have been overwhelmed with the stories of low power FM supporters and those who are desperate to find a place on the radio dial. Farm workers, tribes, niche ethnic and language communities, community service organizations – they all see the LPFM service as a lifeline. We cannot wait any longer to respond to these needs and I am gratified that we are about to do so.

In the course of this LPFM proceeding we have learned much about the potential for expanding community radio in our nation. Radio is a mature service and it does not come as a surprise to learn that no spectrum remains for LPFM stations in the core areas of a few of the country's largest cities. This is extremely regrettable because I know firsthand that the need for a greater diversity of voices in these areas is huge. As a result we must continue to look for ways to expand media opportunities for minority groups, underrepresented ethnic and niche language communities in particular and I pledge to do so.

Nevertheless I am hopeful that our implementation of the LCRA and adoption of various service, selection, and eligibility rule changes will result in the licensing of many hundreds of stations deeply rooted in their communities. In this regard I am most excited about two particular aspects of this window. The first is rule change designed to spur an increase in the origination of local programming content-- the gold standard for broadcasting. The second is the impact of those technical changes that will make FM frequencies available for the first time to nonprofit groups in most major metropolitan areas. I believe that the sustainability of the LPFM service is directly tied to its ability to attract listeners in our urban centers. Prospects appear good. These stations will be able to achieve significant coverage of densely populated neighborhoods. Moreover our great cities are teeming with extraordinary diversity. Most of these diverse groups, however, have no voice at all in the current media landscape. Providing an opportunity for ethnically and culturally diverse people to share their experiences and aspirations will enrich us all and strengthen our common bonds.

Once again, let me say -- I can't wait! Let's get to work.

Thank you Peter Doyle and your team in the Audio Division, including Deputy Chief Jim Bradshaw, Jordan Brinn, Lisa Scanlan, Michael Wagner, Steven Svab and Kim Varner. I also want to echo Jim's thanks to Rob Gates and Larry Hannif-Ali. I can't imagine facing an in-box with over 6,300 applications in it. Rob and Larry, your dedication is inspiring.