

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

June 26, 2014

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Local newscasts are a key source of daily information to citizens of Louisiana, especially in smaller or more rural markets and particularly in times of emergency. Unfortunately, market pressures in the broadcasting industry are making it harder for smaller stations to survive. If regional stations go dark, Louisiana constituents will be the ultimate losers.

As a result of the FCC's decision to count JSAs between television stations as ownership interests, many existing agreements will have to be unwound unless specific waivers are granted. These existing agreements were consistent with the law and rules at the time they were executed, and business plans for small, local broadcasters have been built around them. Forcing these local broadcasters to rely on the speculative possibility of a waiver creates substantial business challenges in smaller markets.

Additionally, I am concerned that the new JSA rules going forward will unnecessarily foreclose many agreements that have resulted in improved local service and a more robust broadcast industry in smaller markets where stations may, absent a JSA, struggle to generate sufficient advertising revenue to support the production of locally oriented programming.

I believe the Commission can successfully address these concerns within the framework of the existing rules and, therefore, urge the Commission to adopt a waiver policy that does not penalize JSAs that were structured and executed in smaller, local markets prior to the issuance of the new rules. In addition, the Commission's waiver policy going forward should favorably regard JSAs that promote more or better local news, public affairs and emergency information, diverse programming such as foreign language and expanded ownership opportunities for minorities and women in broadcasting.

Thank you for consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator