



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

June 3, 2015

The Honorable Michael E. Capuano
U.S. House of Representatives
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Capuano:

Thank you for your letter regarding how communities can be served through low power FM (LPFM) radio stations. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

The LPFM service was designed to provide non-profit entities an opportunity to broadcast niche programming to smaller areas, such as neighborhoods. To that end, the Commission has licensed hundreds of LPFM stations over the years and more recently has granted nearly 2,000 construction permits for new LPFM stations from applications filed in the October – November 2013 filing window. The Media Bureau staff continues to process the remaining LPFM applications, including mutually exclusive applications (*i.e.*, where more than one entity has applied for the same channel).

At this point, it is unclear when the Commission will open another LPFM filing window. Additionally, it is unlikely that there would be many, if any, additional LPFM channels available in most urban markets due to spectrum congestion and interference concerns. However, interested entities could pursue other avenues to distribute their programming, absent a license from the FCC and beyond the frequently noted option to provide programming as an online radio station. For example, existing licensees have the ability to lease or “broker” programming time on broadcast stations to outside entities. Further, with many full-power radio stations transitioning to digital operations, there is the potential to lease one of a station’s several multicast or “HD” channels and to pair this digital signal with an analog FM translator to reach most listeners who continue to use analog radios.

Again, I appreciate your interest in these issues, and I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler