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**Remarks of FCC Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn (as prepared)
National Tribal Radio Summit
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University
Phoenix, Arizona
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Good afternoon, everyone. First, allow me to thank Ms. Taylor, for that kind introduction and all of you, for being so warm and welcoming. I am both honored and delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the inaugural... your first ever FCC Tribal Radio Summit. As some of you may know, in April, I launched a #ConnectingCommunities tour, which builds on my mantra of community, community, community. And in setting out an agenda for the tour, I committed to examining the unique communications challenges facing Tribal lands. Today's conversation continues the journey of listening, mapping out priorities and bringing robust, affordable communications services to all Americans.

I am reminded of my early days as an FCC Commissioner in the summer of 2009. Shortly after I began my first term, the Commission had before it, a request to establish a priority for American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages seeking FM allotments and submitting AM and NCE FM filing window applications. A short time later – in January 2010 – the Commission adopted an order codifying the tribal preference. Fast forward to 2016, where this Summit is allowing us to reflect on the progress we have made, along with the lessons learned, and the means to chart a path forward.

I am hopeful that our actions and our presence affirm how committed we are to promoting the deployment of communications services in Indian Country, but our efforts must continue to be informed, by the principles set forth in our 2000 Tribal Policy Statement. Through meaningful consultation, by working together, we will successfully address the needs of Tribal Nations, and will do so in a manner which recognizes the paramount role of Tribal governments, as sovereign entities, to govern, educate and care for their members.

It is imperative that we continue to bridge long-standing communications divides and that we leave no one behind as we do so. Over the past few years, our strides in Universal Service reforms, and other measures which we have adopted, have been designed to encourage the provision of high-cost and e-rate supported services that benefit each and every one of us. While we have made progress on these fronts, much work remains.

A critical lesson learned with all of these reform measures, is that the solution will not come in a one dimensional, a one size fits all approach. This especially resonates with me because I sincerely believe the same holds true, in the community radio context. Those that know me, know I am a huge proponent of community radio and have recognized from the time I was able to find my favorite station on the dial, that radio is and remains a part of the fabric, of our lives. Local broadcasters inform and educate communities, provide entertainment, and enable our neighbors to feel more connected to each other and the world. For local news, interactive exchanges and up to date information, there is no better resource than community radio.

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Notably, the National Congress of American Indians submitted a 2009 resolution to the Commission, noting that Tribal-owned stations have the potential to support several fundamental missions of Tribal entities within their communities, including, among other things, “strengthening local programming, obtaining diversity of viewpoint, creating cultural preservation and language revitalization, and providing a modern technological outlet to engage community members, especially youth, in the positive development of their values, identity, and quality of life.” This was highly informative as we adopted the Tribal Radio Priority, and remains instructive today.

According to Nielsen Media Research, traditional AM/FM terrestrial radio, still retains undiminished appeal for listeners. 91% of Americans over 12 years old, had listened to broadcast radio in the week before they were surveyed in 2015. But our broadcast and broadband lives, continue to intersect more and more. According to data from Edison Research, the percentage of Americans 12 or older who have listened to online radio in the past month has continued to grow – rising from 53% in 2015 to 57% this year. That share is more than double the percentage of Americans who had done so in 2010 (27%). As of 2014, 73% listened on smartphones, while 61% listened on desktops and laptops. Additionally, through our recent Low Power FM window, we have seen an explosion in hyper-local programming. By the end of this year, we expect to see roughly 2,000 LPFM stations on-the-air.

Local broadcasters also serve a critical role in our communities’ public safety infrastructure. Along with Public Safety Answering Points, those 911 and wireless emergency responders’ networks, broadcasters are one of the three legs of the tripod, of emergency communications. For any community, when disaster strikes, natural or otherwise, the public turns to local broadcasters to find out what is happening, where to go for supplies and shelter, and for what areas to avoid for the health and safety of their families. We rely on broadcasters to provide critical information needs for our communities - day in and day out.

Back in 2010, when I proudly supported adoption of the Tribal Radio Priority, I noted that Tribes and Villages have been woefully underrepresented in the radio ownership ranks. I also expressed concern, that residents of Tribal lands had suffered a lack of radio programming that focused on issues of importance to them. Here, in 2016, as a result of the Tribal Radio Priority, we have seen additional Tribal-owned radio stations spring up – some now providing community radio services, and I am pleased to report, that there are more on the way.

Recently, the Commission issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, seeking comment on a new allocation proposed by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to serve Eagle Butte, South Dakota. While the comment period is still open, I encourage you to file comments in the docket and continue to develop the record, as to why community radio, especially Tribally licensed radio, is so critically important. This marks the sixth time a Tribe or Tribally owned entity has made use of the Tribal Priority since its adoption in 2010. Yes, we have made progress, but more work remains to be done.

We started this journey together, and it is critical that we continue to collaborate in developing the next path forward. Special thanks are due to Native Public Media, ASU’s American Indian Policy Institute and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters for

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partnering with the FCC on this event. We are here today because of our mutual commitment to continue and build upon the accomplishments over the last six years.

Again, a good start - but we must do more. And, here is how we begin. With this inaugural Tribal Radio Summit, we are leveraging the expertise of the FCC and those among you who have been through the process. We are providing a forum to share insights about what it takes to start and run a radio station. The ultimate goal, is that each of you will be empowered by taking the information and tools you receive during this Summit, utilize them and join the ranks of local broadcasters in augmenting the diversity of voices accessible to your communities.

We also should be both cognizant and mindful that broadcast and broadband are intersecting in today's communications marketplace - and each can and sometimes does drive the other. Vertical real-estate for a broadcast facility can be leveraged to deploy other wireless services including broadband. Existing fiber loops can be harnessed to provide broadcast relays between studios and towers. And existing tower assets for wireless services can do double duty to house a broadcast transmitter.

Each Tribe is different and therefore each has to determine the path that is best, based on its particular circumstances and community needs. I encourage you to enlist the FCC, through the Office of Native Affairs and Policy, as a resource in doing so. The Tribal Priority is just one example of an FCC platform aimed at implementing our Tribal Policy Statement. Not just today and tomorrow, but going forward, our experts, our tools, and our resources are designed to collaborate with you on new radio services and to facilitate increased use of the Priority.

Each of you is to be commended for your commitment to Tribal radio and embracing the power it holds to bring your communities and your Nations together. I look forward to working with you to unleash the potential for community radio in Tribal communities. Thank you all, once again.