

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Elimination of Main Studio Rule*, MB Docket No. 17-106

A few months before the start of World War II, the Commission adopted the main studio rule that we take up today—a rule that requires each radio and television broadcast station to maintain a main studio in or near its community of license. In the decades that followed, the Commission relied on this rule to ensure that broadcast stations could stay connected with the local communities they served. In today’s digital age, however, a brick and mortar studio is no longer needed to achieve this goal. Technological innovations now provide stations with far more—and far more efficient and effective—ways to interact with their local communities than in-person visits to a studio. These include social media pages, mobile apps, and website comments, not to mention emails and phone calls.

Not only is the main studio rule unnecessary, but the record shows that it actually hurts the ability of smaller stations, including those serving rural areas, from competing in today’s media marketplace. In light of modern technology, broadcasters don’t need a main studio to provide programming that responds to the needs of the local community. The Commission already made this finding when it relaxed the main studio rule in 1987, and the evidence thirty years later simply confirms it. Indeed, the regulatory relief the FCC provides today could translate into tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in savings, particularly for smaller and rural broadcasters. A case in point is the owner of several radio stations in rural Texas. This broadcaster spends nearly \$40,000 a year to maintain main studios in communities of only 900 and 1,800 residents, respectively. If the rule were repealed, the general manager says that he will be able to divert those savings toward hiring an additional reporter to cover local news and sports.

The substantial yet unnecessary burdens associated with the main studio requirement have led a wide range of parties—from minority-owned and foreign language stations to broadcasters of all sizes serving our cities, suburbs, and rural areas—to call for the FCC to repeal the now outdated rule. I agree. I’m glad the FCC is moving forward in taking this step.