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For Immediate Release**FCC PROPOSES TO FINE SINCLAIR BROADCAST GROUP OVER \$13 MILLION FOR VIOLATIONS OF SPONSORSHIP ID RULES*****Paid Programming Must Include Proper Disclosures When Broadcast***

WASHINGTON, December 21, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today proposed a \$13,376,200 fine against Sinclair Broadcast Group for apparently failing to make required disclosures in connection with programming sponsored by a third party. The programming was broadcast more than 1,700 times, either as stories resembling independently generated news coverage that aired during the local news, or as longer-form stories aired as 30-minute television programs. This is the largest fine that the Commission has ever proposed for a violation of its sponsorship identification rules.

The FCC's sponsorship identification rules help ensure that consumers know who is trying to persuade them through paid programming. When a broadcaster fails to disclose the sponsor of paid programming, it may mislead the public into believing the paid broadcast material is the station's own independently generated news coverage or editorial content, rather than a commercial announcement. Sponsorship identification is also important because it promotes fair and equitable competition among sponsors.

In April 2016, the Commission received an anonymous complaint alleging Sinclair had aired paid programming about the Huntsman Cancer Institute during news programs but failed to disclose that the Huntsman Cancer Foundation paid for the stories to air. The FCC's Enforcement Bureau opened an investigation and found that Sinclair and the Foundation had entered into an agreement under which Sinclair produced and supplied programming to both Sinclair and non-Sinclair television stations. This programming promoted the Foundation and the Institute and included 60- to 90-second sponsored stories made to look like independently generated news coverage and 30-minute paid television programs.

When broadcast licensees are paid or promised money or other valuable consideration to air specific programming, the Communications Act and FCC rules require them to air an announcement stating the program was paid for and the name of the individual or entity who paid for the program. Further, entities like Sinclair that supply paid programming to other broadcasters must inform them that the programming is sponsored. Today, the Commission finds that Sinclair apparently failed to make these announcements to its viewers or report to non-Sinclair stations that the programming was paid.

The proposed fine, formally called a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, details the Commission's allegations of unlawful conduct and proposes a monetary forfeiture for such conduct. Sinclair will have 30 days to respond to this notice or to pay the proposed fine. The Commission will review any written response and additional evidence it receives before determining next steps. A Forfeiture Order imposing a fine or any settlement would require another Commission vote.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).