

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Amendment of Part 74 of the Commission's Rules Regarding FM Translator Interference*, MB Docket No. 18-119

In his 1942 book, *Sound and Fury: An Informal History of Broadcasting*, University of Chicago Professor Francis Chase, Jr described the problems that interference posed to radio in the 1920s. According to his understated description, "Chaos rode the air waves, pandemonium filled every loudspeaker and the twentieth century Tower of Babel was made in the image of the antenna towers of some thousand broadcasters who, like the Kilkenny cats, were about to eat each other up."

This state of affairs, Professor Chase noted, led Congress to establish the precursor to the FCC, the Federal Radio Commission, for the purpose of preventing harmful interference. Today's Notice harkens back to this original purpose by taking up the problem of interference caused by FM translators.

As the Notice explains, we have seen an increase in FM translators over the past few years. These are radio stations that rebroadcast the signal of an AM or FM station. Among other things, they help address some of the technical challenges facing the AM band, since in today's digital world everything from iPhone chargers to LED lights can degrade the audio quality for listeners of AM stations. FM translators are also important for remote and rural areas, as they help to fill in gaps in coverage from full-power stations.

But as more translators fill the airwaves, the risk of interference grows. And broadcasters both large and small agree that our current process for handling translator interference is cumbersome, frustrating, and expensive. Currently, a single interference complaint can lead to lengthy disputes and translators being taken off the air in areas of the country where they are most needed. Commission staff expend significant resources mediating disputes over the legitimacy of complaints, and listeners can get caught up in the back and forth between stations. This system has created incentives for bad actors.

As this item recognizes, there are better ways to handle interference disputes. So I am glad that we are teeing up a range of options—from allowing translators to move to any available frequency to requiring threshold showings from those claiming harmful interference.

I want to thank the Media Bureau for its work on this matter. The Notice has my support.