

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510-1304

February 22, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write today with concerns about the amended proposal filed yesterday by Sinclair Broadcast Group for its proposed \$3.9 billion merger with Tribune Media Company. Sinclair's amended proposal falls far short of making meaningful divestments. Instead, it exploits loopholes to skirt the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) media ownership limits and enables Sinclair to continue to dictate content to divested stations, threatening the interests of local audiences and harming competition.

In their amended proposal, Sinclair disclosed its plan to divest from Tribune's WPIX-TV New York, WGN-TV Chicago, and KSWB-TV San Diego stations in order for the merger to comply with the FCC's 39 percent national media ownership cap. However, despite having the appearance of complying with the cap, the proposal also discloses that Sinclair already has purchase agreements with buyers for WPIX and WGN, which would allow Sinclair to avoid violating the FCC's media ownership limits while retaining the ability to remotely operate the stations.

While remotely operated stations would not count towards local or national FCC media ownership limits, Sinclair could still dictate content on these stations, including mandating Sinclair-produced segments. Sinclair also could be involved in decisions that result in firing local reporters. In fact, Sinclair has a concerning history of doing just that.

Sinclair's amended proposal has fallen far short of its obligation to comply with existing FCC media ownership limits and fails to protect the Congressionally identified public benefit gained from a competitive broadcast landscape that serves the diverse and unique interests of local audiences. I urge you to give the proposed merger careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

CC: Mignon Clyburn, Federal Communications Commissioner
Jessica Rosenworcel, Federal Communications Commissioner
Michael O'Rielly, Federal Communications Commissioner
Brendan Carr, Federal Communications Commissioner



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the recent amendment filed to Sinclair Broadcast Group's proposal to acquire Tribune Media. You ask in your letter that the proposed merger be given careful consideration.

I can assure you that the Commission staff is thoroughly reviewing the current record, including the amendments to which you refer. Specifically, the Bureau staff will review the transaction, including all recent filings, to ensure that it complies with all applicable laws. The Commission's informal 180-day shot clock has been paused since January 4, 2018, as we ascertain whether we have adequate information upon which to base a decision on the proposed transfer of control.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are very important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai", is written over a printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ajit V. Pai