Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
Amendment of Part 74 of the Commission's Rules	)	MB Docket No. 18-119
Regarding FM Translator Interference	)	

Directed to: The Commission

COMMENTS OF PLYMOUTH ROCK BROADCASTING CO., INC.

Plymouth Rock Broadcasting Co., Inc. ("Plymouth Rock") hereby respectfully submits its Comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 18-60, released May 10, 2018 ("NPRM"), in the above-captioned proceeding. With respect thereto, the following is stated:

Plymouth Rock is the licensee of WPLM(AM) and WPLM-FM, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Plymouth Rock is not currently the licensee of any FM translator stations. As the licensee of both an AM station and an FM station, however, Plymouth Rock is both well aware of both the potential benefits that an FM translator can represent and the substantial, potential negatives associated with interference from a translator's operation.

Indeed, Plymouth Rock is currently a party to a proceeding in which it is opposing an application for construction permit for a new FM translator at Worcester, Massachusetts, due to predicted interference to the reception of WPLM-FM by regular listeners. That application, File No. BNPFT-20171220AAW, was initially dismissed on June 26, 2018, and the applicant's petition for reconsideration of that action is now pending. As a result of the pleading battle associated with this application for a new translator, Plymouth Rock is acutely aware of the types of issues which may arise when a translator is interfering with, or threatening to interfere with, a

full-power FM station's service to its listeners, whether close to the station or at the outer limits of its service area.

The Commission has stated that through the above-captioned rulemaking proceeding, it is seeking to streamline the rules governing interference caused to full-service FM stations by translators and to speed up the resolution of complaints with regard to such interference or potential interference, in part by bringing more certainty to the standards by which they are judged. While Plymouth Rock certainly concurs in these laudable goals, it would caution that many situations involving conflicts between a long-established full power FM station and a new translator cannot be appropriately, or even fairly, resolved by a cookie-cutter approach. Rather, circumstances particular to each station's situation necessitate a careful evaluation of all of the relevant facts and not simply the application of a bright-line test.

For example, the Commission has proposed to modify Sections 74.1203(a)(3) and 74.1204(f) so that it would consider only objections to interference or potential interference related to listeners within the full-power stations 54 dBu contour. Despite the fact that this proposal would offer less protection to Class B and B1 stations, for which the protected contour is the 54 dBu and not the 60 dBu contour, the Commission has proposed to apply the same standard to all classes of stations and does not believe that any consideration should be given to the different policy considerations which led the Commission to require greater contour protection for Class B and B1 stations.

As an initial matter, Plymouth Rock would urge the Commission to maintain its traditional treatment of FM translators as secondary services. Only such treatment can maintain a proper balance between the new service that a translator may be able to provide and interference with the established service upon which listeners have come to rely. As the

Commission itself noted in Paragraph 27 of the NPRM, a listenable signal may extend well beyond a station's 60 dBu contour. The same is true beyond a Class B or B1's 54 dBu contour. Indeed, because of the greater protection afforded to Class B and B1 stations, one would expect that the availability of a listenable signal would drop off gradually outside the 54 dBu contour of a Class B station in the same way that there is a gradual drop-off outside of the 60 dBu contours of other classes of stations. In fact, it is commonly understood that stations may have listeners as far out as their 40 dBu contours.

In fact, it has been Plymouth Rock's experience that WPLM-FM does have many, dedicated listeners well outside of WPLM-FM's 54 dBu contour. In connection with its ongoing efforts to understand where its regular listeners are located, it solicited listeners to send in information as to the locations from which they listened. After Plymouth Rock learned that a number of its regular listeners are located in the area likely to receive interference from a proposed translator in the community of Worcester, Massachusetts, it asked some of them to sign declarations to confirm their status as regular listeners of WPLM-FM. In response, Plymouth Rock received 17 signed declarations from *bona fide* listeners without any financial or familial connection to WPLM-FM or Plymouth Rock. All of these listeners are located outside of the WPLM-FM 54 dBu contour.

Attached hereto as Exhibit 1 is a tabulation of such listeners and a map depicting where each of them is located.[1] Additionally, the tabulation lists the WPLM-FM signal strength at each of the listener's locations. These figures range from a high of 52.8 dBu to a low of 40.0 dBu. All of the persons listed, however, have established that they are regular listeners to WPLM-FM,

[1] This information was previously submitted as part of a petition to deny an application for a new FM translator, File No. BNPFT-20171220AAW. As noted above, that application has been dismissed, but a petition for reconsideration of the dismissal is currently pending.

and listeners with enough dedication to the station that they would take the time and trouble to sign declarations to be submitted to the Commission in order to try to preserve their ability to receive the station's signal. These listeners have made it quite clear that they have a substantial interest in maintaining their access to the WPLM-FM programming upon which they have come to rely.

Furthermore, Plymouth Rock knows that it has a substantial number of additional listeners outside of its 54 dBu contour in Worcester alone. Recent shared information regarding ratings, to which WPLM does not subscribe, indicates in the range of 3,000 listeners to the WPLM-FM signal in Worcester. Such substantial service is not to be tossed aside lightly. It is not the place of a secondary service to take away these listeners' current ability to receive the programming that they want to hear, without objectionable interference. The purpose of secondary services such as translators is not to interfere with long-established listening patterns. Rather, the very nature of a secondary service means that such services must protect listeners who have come to rely upon the over-the-air service of a full-power station, regardless of whether they are on one side or the other of a particular signal strength line set by regulators.

Plymouth Rock does recognize that there is a point at which a station's broadcast signal becomes so faint that, as a practical matter listeners will cease to tune in because of the difficulties in hearing the programming over the static. Plymouth Rock submits, however, that is own experience shows that this point is not the 54 dBu contour for a Class B station. If the Commission does decide to select a particular signal strength contour beyond which it will not accept complaints of either existing or future interference, that signal strength should be no more

than 40 dBu.[2] As is demonstrated by the attached tabulation of listeners who submitted declarations to establish their status as regular listeners, two of the 17 receive a 40.0 dBu signal from WPLM-FM. As noted above, these are two listeners dedicated enough to take the time and trouble to submit declarations and, given the inertia which is a common part of human nature, likely represent a much greater number of listeners who routinely listen to a 40 dBu signal from WPLM-FM or other stations. The listening preferences of these individuals deserve protection from interference from secondary services who have a long-established obligation to provide protection to primary stations.

Moreover, it is not only individual listeners of WPLM-FM who would suffer from interference beyond the station's 54 dBu contour. Another significant issue that must also be considered is that WPLM-FM is a Massachusetts Primary entry point for EAS alerts. As such, WPLM-FM is a source of EAS State messages. See 47 C.F.R. §11.18(c). As a result, WPLM-FM and stations like it are relied upon as upstream initiators of alerts. Frequently, at the edges of Operational Areas, monitoring stations are unable to monitor their required EAS monitored stations because of reception issues. They therefore will monitor adjacent Operational Area Primaries such as WPLM-FM to complete their reception of alerts and tests in accordance with FCC and FEMA regulations. Worcester is just adjacent to the Primary EAS operational area that WPLM-FM serves under the Massachusetts state EAS plan. As a result, it is critical that reception of WPLM-FM EAS alerts in the Worcester and surrounding area not be compromised by the operation of a translator, and the same would be true of other, similarly situated stations.

[2] Further, the Commission should accept all generally recognized methods of signal prediction from stations seeking to establish that a listener falls within a particular contour, since some alternate methods, such as Longley-Rice, are widely recognized as more accurate than the Commission's standard prediction methodology.

The importance of such alerts was once again graphically illustrated just this past weekend, when Worcester County was hit by a tornado, which was the third tornado in the county in the last two weeks. *See*, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/webster-massachusetts-tornado-national-weather-service-today-2018-08-04/. Plymouth Rock recognizes that translators can allow stations to provide improved or some new service. These potential benefits, however, do not outweigh the greater dangers to safety of life and property due to greater interference with EAS alerts.

In sum, Plymouth Rock would urge the Commission not to establish any arbitrary signal strength beyond which a current, regular listener's ability to receive a particular station will not be protected from interference from translators. To do so would run counter to translators' fundamental status as secondary facilities. To the extent that the Commission might decide to draw such a line, however, for Class B stations, that limit should be no more than the 40.0 dBu signal contour. Not only would it be fundamentally unfair to limit Class B and B1 stations to only their protected signal contour while other classes of stations are protected beyond that contour, but Plymouth Rock has found that it has a substantial number of regular and dedicated listeners who receive between 40.0 and 54.0 dBu signals. If such listeners' interference complaints may not even be considered, the Commission would be saying that their established and currently existing listening choices are of less value than those of potential, future listeners who might decide to listen to some other station. Plymouth Rock submits that such decision would be a bad policy choice.

I hereby verify that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Respectfully submitted,

PLYMOUTH ROCK BROADCASTING CO., INC.

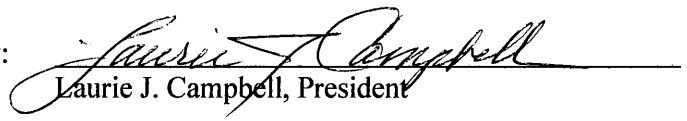
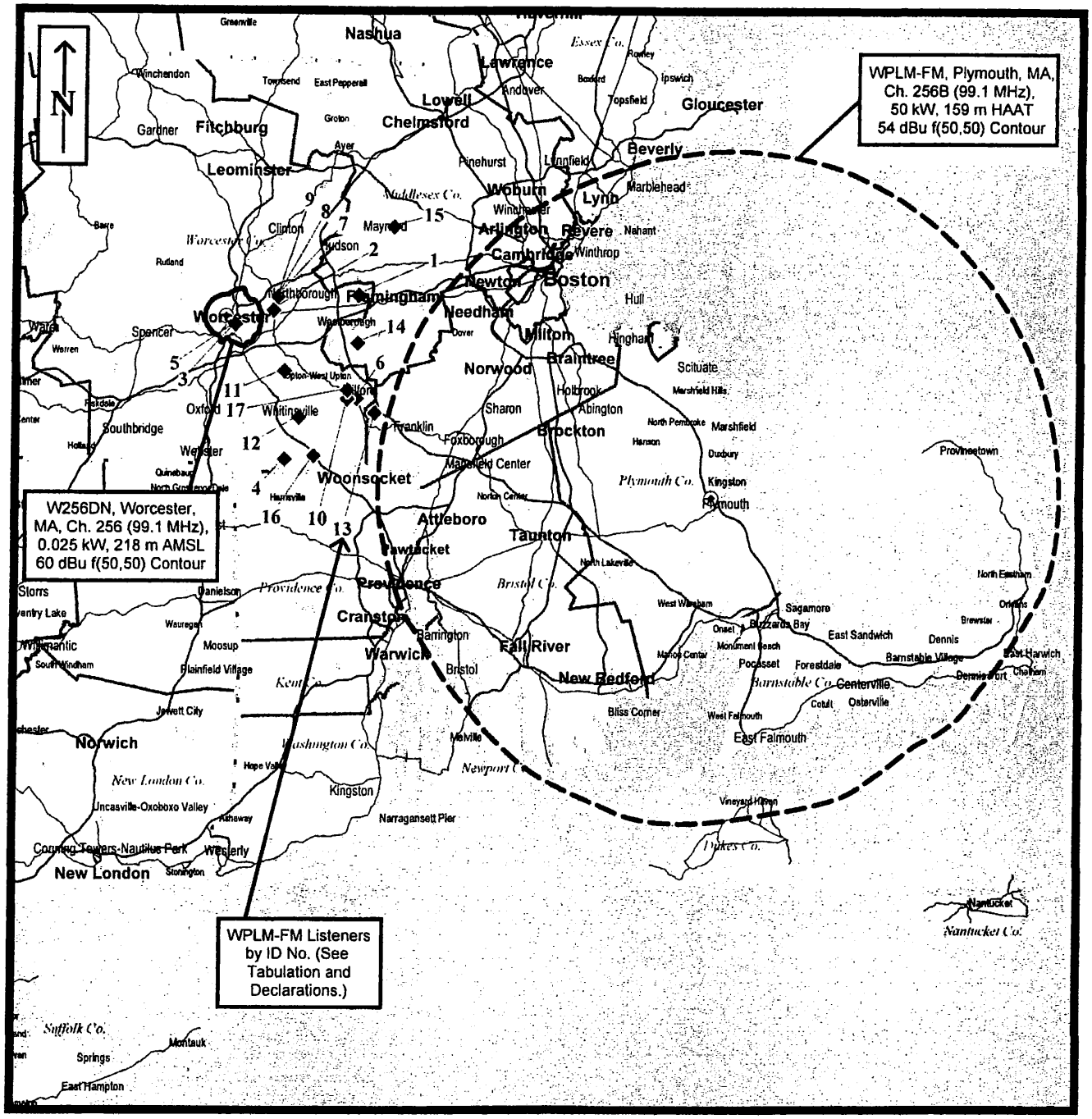
By: 
Laurie J. Campbell, President

Exhibit 1



WPLM-FM LISTENER LOCATIONS MAP

duTreil, Lundin & Rackley, Inc. Sarasota, Florida

WPLM-FM LISTENER PREDICTED INTERFERENCE ANALYSIS

ID (See Map)	Listener Name	LatD	LatM	LatS	LonD	LonM	LonS	Distance & Azimuth From WPLM-FM (km/deg True)		Distance & Azimuth From Translator (km/deg True)		WPLM-FM Desired (D) f(50,50) Signal (dBu)	Translator Undesired (U) f(50,10) Signal (dBu)	U/D Ratio (more than -20 dB fails Requirement)	Interference Result based on -20 dB U/D
1	Paul C. Thayer, Jr.	42	18	41.8	71	31	7.5	77.7	299.8	25.4	80.2	48.3	37.2	-11.1	Fail
2	David Lalone	42	17	11.0	71	42	50.3	91.0	293.3	9.1	80.6	42.5	54.3	11.8	Fail
3	Leeds Mitchell III	42	15	48.0	71	48	4.7	96.8	290.3	2.1	121.9	40.0	79.3	39.3	Fail
4	David Plamondon	42	2	7.4	71	41	11.9	82.0	275.6	28.7	157.0	46.3	32.5	-13.8	Fail
5	Paul LaMalva	42	15	48.0	71	48	4.7	96.8	290.3	2.1	121.9	40.0	79.3	39.3	Fail
6	Laurie Irwin	42	8	19.4	71	31	19.9	70.6	286.0	29.0	121.0	51.1	35.3	-15.8	Fail
7	Paul Wright	42	18	33.5	71	42	12.9	91.2	295.0	10.6	67.6	42.4	51.1	8.7	Fail
8	Meg Wright	42	18	33.5	71	42	12.9	91.2	295.0	10.6	67.6	42.4	51.1	8.7	Fail
9	Jonathan Wright	42	18	33.5	71	42	12.9	91.2	295.0	10.6	67.6	42.4	51.1	8.7	Fail
10	Denise Nelson	42	8	15.6	71	32	38.3	72.3	285.5	27.5	123.2	50.3	35.9	-14.4	Fail
11	David P Markt	42	11	2.5	71	41	18.3	85.2	286.8	14.9	131.8	44.9	46.3	1.4	Fail
12	Jeffrey Deiana	42	6	23.0	71	39	17.8	80.5	281.4	23.1	143.3	47.0	38.4	-8.6	Fail
13	Diane E. Cadman	42	6	49.5	71	28	47.1	66.5	284.5	33.4	122.0	52.8	32.9	-19.9	Fail
14	Gayle M. Thompson	42	13	53.4	71	31	12.4	73.9	293.8	25.4	100.4	49.7	37.8	-11.9	Fail
15	Toni Culbert	42	25	37.0	71	26	17.7	79.5	310.3	36.0	61.4	47.3	30.3	-17.0	Fail
16	Walter W. Kritemeyer	42	2	27.1	71	37	12.8	76.6	276.4	30.7	147.1	48.6	33.8	-14.8	Fail
17	Candace Hulyk	42	9	7.1	71	32	36.2	72.7	286.7	26.7	120.3	50.2	36.8	-13.4	Fail