

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

935

September 2, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Received & Inspected

SFD 1 2015

FCC Mail Room

**MB Consumer
Broadcast Audio
Service**

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

AM radio is the most diverse communications service in America. With relatively low barriers to entry, there are more minority-owned AM stations than any other outlet, including in top-ranked markets where audiences and advertising revenues are greatest.

The content of AM radio is similarly diverse. In addition to music, news and sports, AM radio is a primary source for cultural and in-language programming. As a result, AM radio is a crucial outlet for African American listeners to access the information and entertainment that is most relevant to their communities.

Unfortunately, AM radio stations face certain economic and technical challenges that are causing some listeners to migrate to newer, higher fidelity alternatives. In particular, a troubling number of minority-owned and other stations that lack access to capital have been forced to shut down or sell out, posing risks to radio diversity.

The FCC has tools at its disposal to enhance the AM radio experience, and we are heartened to learn that you are finally advancing the FCC's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service. However, it has come to our attention that you may reverse course on the most promising mechanism proposed therein: an application window for FM translators that is limited to AM licensees. Inclusion of this AM-only application window is essential to provide meaningful relief for AM radio.

The clearer signal reception and extended hours enabled by translators have allowed some minority-owned AM stations to attract more listeners and advertisers and improve their economic stability. But, as the FCC has recognized, translators are a scarce commodity in many areas, blocking many AM broadcasters from obtaining a translator, or forcing them to participate in bidding wars that favor more powerful, well-funded stations. Too many minority-owned broadcasters lack the financial resources to purchase a translator, which means that listeners to these stations often receive lower quality service and programming than other audiences. Opening this process increases the opportunity for minority participation and supports minority stations in their efforts to broadcast.

An AM-only application window for new FM translators would provide every AM radio broadcaster an equal opportunity to obtain a translator. Such an approach would also allow AM broadcasters to use their limited resources to improve service for listeners, leading to more

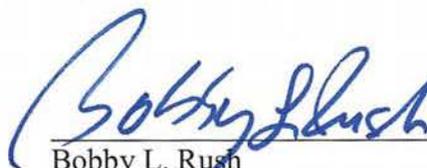
economically viable minority-owned AM radio stations, a more diverse broadcasting ecosystem, and more attractive options for urban, Hispanic, and in-language audiences.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the FCC promptly open an application window for FM translators that are limited to AM radio licensees.

Sincerely,



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
U.S. House of Representatives
2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rush:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

With the leadership of Commissioner Clyburn, we have reached a compromise that prioritizes assisting Class C and Class D stations, which are the most technically challenged stations in the AM band. Under this compromise, stations will be able to choose from two options for relief.

First, stations looking for immediate relief can partner with an existing FM translator up to 250 miles away, seeking approval under our minor modification rules. The first modification window – for Class C and D stations only – will begin in January 2016, after an outreach effort to educate station owners about the opportunities and choices that this window will provide. After the first modification window, a second modification window will open for all AM stations for three months.

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This compromise is responsive to the action requested in your letter, and we believe that it will help ensure the longevity of AM stations. The modification window option will get translators in the hands of AM station owners who most need them by early next year. For those stations that can wait, the addition of the auction window after the 2017 incentive auction gives AM stations another opportunity to enhance their audience reach by providing clearer signal reception. This tiered approach that provides relief to Class C and D stations first is the kind of common sense compromise that serves the public interest.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable David Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
225 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
U.S. House of Representatives
509 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Plaskett:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

With the leadership of Commissioner Clyburn, we have reached a compromise that prioritizes assisting Class C and Class D stations, which are the most technically challenged stations in the AM band. Under this compromise, stations will be able to choose from two options for relief.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Donald M. Payne
U.S. House of Representatives
103 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Payne:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Brenda Lawrence
U.S. House of Representatives
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lawrence:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
U.S. House of Representatives
1339 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jeffries:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge
U.S. House of Representatives
2344 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Fudge:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
U.S. House of Representatives
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cummings:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
2351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 26, 2015

The Honorable André Carson
U.S. House of Representatives
2453 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Carson:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 26, 2015

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Karen Bass
U.S. House of Representatives
408 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Bass:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's proceeding to revitalize AM radio service, and expressing concern for the impact of minority-owned stations without an application window for FM translators limited to AM licensees. Your views are very important to me.

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