

I am writing to express my concern about reducing the coverage area of Class-A AM radio stations. I think this would be a terrible decision. I do not "have a horse in this race." I am not presently, nor have I ever been employed by one of these stations. These high-power stations provide the best way to reach the most people over a widespread area during emergencies and natural disasters. FM radio is considerably more limited in coverage. Online services, cellular service etc is very unreliable during many emergencies. AM radio and specifically the big Class-A stations have been proven over and over again to be the best method of informing the public over a wide area. When Hurricane Katrina was ravaging New Orleans and in the days that followed I, along with tens of thousands of others was able to stay up-to-date on what was happening via 870-WWL. NO other Louisiana station was capable of doing that. Here in the Atlanta area, only one AM station has a signal that covers the entire area both day and night, and that is WSB-750. To restrict that would be a shame and should be a crime. I do not see how this helps AM radio, I believe it would be the final nail in AM radio's coffin. In many areas, the only AM stations that garner any significant ratings are the big 50,000 watt Class-A stations and they are often the only reason anyone would even tune to AM. Remove their signal advantage; increase the interference to these stations and many of those listeners will have no reason to bother with AM. I spend a significant amount of time every year in Canada. WSB-750 is how I keep up with what's going on back home. I also enjoy listening to WSM-650 in Nashville, a station that provides a unique format and has many listeners over a huge area. And I find WCBS-880 in New York to be a good source of news from the USA whenever I am in Canada. Additionally, I travel often at night by car and enjoy listening to these stations as well as KMOX-1120 in St. Louis, WWJ-760 in Detroit, WLS-890 in Chicago among others. What I would suggest is DECREASING the amount of interference on AM radio. There are many stations that seem to serve absolutely no purpose beyond using electricity. They have no local news, no local content. They are basically useless. I notice a number of AM stations "simulcast" on FM. I say make them choose one or the other. If they choose FM, then shut the AM off. Finally, I suggest increasing the power of the Class-A stations. I've read that in other countries, AM radio stations operate with much higher power and that experiments with 500,000 watts were done in the US many years ago. Increase the power for these stations to 100,000 watts, up to 500,000 watts where possible. Protect these stations from interference, raise their power so they can overcome the static and let them continue to serve the public. These stations in many places are the only sign of life on the AM dial. Please don't take that away.