

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
2002 Biennial Regulatory Review – Review of)	MM Docket No. 02-277
the Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules)	
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202)	
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996)	
)	
Cross-Ownership of Braodcast Stations and)	MM Docket No. 01-235
Newspapers)	
)	
Rule and Policies Concerning Multiple Ownership)	
Of Radio Broadcast Stations in Local Markets)	
)	
Definition of Radio Markets)	MM Docket No. 00-244

To: The Commission and Chief, Mass Media Bureau:

MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE COMMENTS AND REPLY
COMMENTS

The Newspaper Guild – CWA, Writers Guild of America East, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Seattle Times, Consumer Federation of America, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, and Center for Digital Democracy (collectively hereinafter “Newspaper Guild *et al.*”) respectfully request an extension to file comments and reply comments in the above-referenced docket pursuant to part 1.46 of the Commission’s rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.46. The December 2, 2002 deadline established by the Commission does not provide sufficient time to effectively analyze and comment upon all of the issues and data provided in the proposed rulemaking. Therefore, Newspaper Guild *et al.* request the Commission to extend the comment period to four months (120 days), and the reply comment period to two months (60 days). Furthermore, instead of the comment period running from release of the twelve studies, it should run from full release of the data underlying the studies.

As the Commission noted when it adopted the NPRM, “[t]oday’s action marks the beginning of the most comprehensive look at media ownership regulation ever undertaken by the FCC.” Press Release, Federal Communications Commission, FCC Initiates Third Biennial Review of Broadcast Ownership Rules (Sept. 24, 2002). Indeed, in introducing the Notice to the Commission, Media Bureau Chief Ken Ferree underscored the significance of the proposals by comparing them as a Copernican event that could fundamentally transform institutions of our democracy.

Given the scope of the proposed changes, the material raised by both the NPRM and the accompanying studies, and their importance to all citizens, a 90-day comment and reply comment period is insufficient. Because this proceeding will affect every citizen and resident of the United States, Newspaper Guild *et al.* require a sufficient amount of time to encourage greater public participation. The NPRM involves complex issues that deserve broad public debate as part of the Rulemaking process. Additional time will also permit a greater number of experts and members of the public who traditionally do not participate in Commission proceedings to play a role. Without such an extension, industry groups that have huge resources will be able to dominate the public comment period. More time will ideally help the public better understand the issues, find the resources to file, and engage in the broad civic dialogue about media ownership that this proceeding requires.

The Commission’s Media Ownership Task Force took almost a full year—from Oct. 29, 2001 to Oct. 1, 2002—to create and implement a research agenda. This request for an extension will give the public only one-third the time the Commission took to develop and release the studies. Newspaper Guild *et al.* understand that others have requested that the Commission place on the record all the material used to conduct the dozen studies released by the Media Ownership

Task Force. The “clock” for the NPRM should be frozen until the underlying data has been released so that the public can more effectively participate in the comment process. The underlying data sets and other materials are necessary if an honest debate is to occur over both the merits of the Commission’s reports as well as in the issues raised by the NPRM.

Accordingly, Newspaper Guild *et al.* request that the Commission extend the comment and reply comment periods in the above-captioned dockets to 120 and 60 days, respectively, and officially begin the comment period after the Commission releases the data used to develop the studies.

Respectfully submitted,

The Newspaper Guild, CWA
Writers Guild of America, East
American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
Seattle Times
Consumer Federation of America
Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers
Center for Digital Democracy

October 22, 2002