Before theFEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commisioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 has already greatly affected radio stations across the country, by limiting the range of American voices heard by the public. American culture has been one of this country's greatest exports, and that culture has often been created by the poorest among us. It's been one of our greatest democratic outlets.

The few companies which have taken over since 1996 have a proven record of devaluing local voices, hiring DJs to broadcast in several markets at once, choosing music on a national level, instead of paying attention to local tastes. Instead of using music and the airwaves to bring people together, these companies have a lengthy track record of divisive programming and mean-spirited broadcasts.

Consolidating ownership of the airwaves so limits the availability of outlets for artists and local personalities, that new culture is stifled before it has a chance. We can see how this has affected consumption of American music overseas, as well as here in America. Our culture could be our greatest diplomacy right now, and we are losing it by silencing the diversity of American voices. If any review of this act should come before the FCC, it should be in the direction of pre-1996 limits, not in disregarding the few regulations left.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate, or even attempt to demonstrate, the negative effects that media deregulation and consolidation have had on the diversity of our media. While there may indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented has been severely limited. And many people do not have access to these new sources, such as the Internet, or video productions.

The right to conduct an informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was renewed in the marketplace of diverse ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge and consolidate further, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

I urge the FCC to preserve the public interest by keeping the media ownership rules in question intact. Then, as a listener, I beg the FCC to reconsider the deregulation imposed by The Telecommunications Act in the first place.

Also, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February of 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public. The rarified, lawyerly atmosphere of an FCC rulemaking is not an appropriate decision-making venue when questions as profound as the freedom of our media are at stake. I encourage the Commissioners to come out and meet some of the people who do not have a financial interest in this issue, but a social interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Ida Hakkila