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Federal Communications Commission

Federal Communications Commission Field Hearing

Friday, March 7, 2003

University of Washington HUB Auditorium - Seattle, Washington

My name is Tom Evans Krause from Lynnwood, Washington. Those in the radio and record industries know me by my professional name Tom Evans. With 30 years experience I've DJ'd and been a successful radio station program director and operations manager in markets including Boise, Salt Lake City, and the Greater Tampa Bay area, author and publisher in the trade press, radio consultant including a station in the Fisher group, independent record promotion consultant working with major labels, small labels, and client radio stations, including some in the Clear Channel group, band manager, ad buyer. I currently head the broadcasting department, teach and general manage two radio stations at Green River Community College here in the Puget Sound area.

I speak today as a private citizen, not on behalf of Green River or the State of Washington.

Based on my experience, I strongly urge the Commission to hold the line on modifying or dropping the rules, which limit the number of stations that can be owned in one market. I also urge the Commission avoid modifying or dropping rules governing cross-ownership of radio, TV and newspapers in the same market. While not my area of expertise, I'm also concerned about possible rule changes regarding same-market TV station ownership as well as national TV network ownership.

Though there have been early indications of some benefits of consolidation since the Telcom Act of '96 - fewer stations go dark, radio format diversity by market has actually increased - there are fewer industry jobs, less innovation, and a far greater drive to "turn a buck" than to serve the public.

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It is premature to further relax ownership rules when we don't have a final picture on the full impact of Telcom 96. Some say a further relaxation is needed to offset competition from new media such as DBS and the Internet. Again it is premature to substantially change existing ownership rules based on speculation as to what may or may not happen in the coming years. Why the rush now? Remedies for broadcasters can always be applied in future as needed.

While a little consolidation may be good, too much consolidation would put too much power in the hands of a few. Competition is good. Competition is healthy. Competition is in the public interest.

The push by some in the industry to have the Commission drop or substantially modify existing ownership rules is driven by dollars and dividends, not what's necessarily best for the public. And these are the public airwaves we're talking about.

I thank the Commissioners for their time and attention.