

While you may not have received a large number of comments from constituents about this, the FCC has reportedly getting well over 15,000 public comments, well and away one of the largest public responses to a rulemaking in the agency's history. And the overwhelming sentiment has been opposed to the loosening of media ownership rules.

Given the almost total silence on the part of the mass media (especially TV news) about this issue, it is not surprising that few people have contacted their congressional representatives, particularly while the media has been playing up such monumentally important public policy issues as the Laci Peterson murder investigation and the President's tail-hook landing on an aircraft carrier.

Then again, that's just one more set of examples of why further media consolidation is a very bad idea.

Since Michael Powell says the market is his religion, he should understand that the proper working of Adam Smith's "invisible hand" is based on the concept of vigorous and diverse competition (an infinity of buyers and sellers).

We certainly don't have even a fraction of the diversity we once did, with most major markets down to one or maybe two major daily newspapers, a handful of radio stations, many of which do not even provide an occasional minute of headlines, and a scant few TV stations offering 22 minutes of news, sports, weather and vacuous chat twice a day.

Given the simultaneous consolidation and vertical integration of cable and satellite conveyors, internet providers and cable channels, the near megalopoly of all mass communications is a very real possibility. And, as the saying goes, you won't miss your water 'til the well runs dry.

Please don't mistake silence for consent. If you doubt that your constituents care, use your franking privilege to ask them.

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