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I am writing to ask the FCC to support Low Power FM for Louisiana and help make the case to repeal the Radio Preservation Act of 2000. The reason that this is important is that there are efforts by companies that own commercial stations to block Low Power FM. Low Power FM support is only one component of a representative media system, but is important to local communities.

In New Orleans we have a number of radio stations, but as of earlier this year, nearly 20% of them are owned by one company. Many others are playing programming that is disseminated nationally, thereby not reflecting the local flavor of our unique culture. WW"OZ," a community radio station, does not cover local news, and WW"NO" only covers the arts locally. We need electronic mass media that focus on our local news and Low Power FM is an important solution.

One area that has been able to demonstrate the value of Low Power FM is Opelousas' KOCZ, supported by the Southern Development Foundation. They broadcast some of the best local Zydeco music and have lots of programs on health, community news and issues. They have been able to provide something that the dominant presence of consolidated commercial radio in Opelousas shut out.

If there was an environment more supportive of Low Power FM we could use stations to help teach technical skills to teens. We have had some success with teaching youth about video and developing a cadre of print media teen groups. One more piece to making media more responsive to local needs would be the addition of Low Power FM stations.

The Radio Broadcasting Preservation Act of 2000 was a piece of special interest legislation slipped in as a rider to an appropriations bill. In January of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission established the new Low Power FM radio service, in order to provide totally non-commercial, locally-oriented broadcast opportunities to communities across the country. The idea behind the initiative was to increase diversity by giving a new voice to local community organizations, churches, and non-profit groups. As a result of the FCC initiative, there are now dozens of new, legally operating low-power FM stations serving predominantly rural communities around the nation.

In December of 2000, Congress -- under intense pressure from established broadcasters -- slipped the Radio Broadcasting Preservation Act into a 'must-pass' appropriations rider to the federal budget, gutting the original Low Power FM Radio (LPFM) service. The act claimed that LPFM stations would interfere with existing full-power radio stations and that the implementation of the service should be limited. As a result of this act, almost 75% of the opportunities for new LPFM stations were destroyed. The service was established, but only in a very limited version of its original scope. Urban areas and minorities were hit hardest by the results of the Radio Broadcasting Preservation Act.

Part of the "Radio Preservation Act" mandated an independent study to see if these claims of potential were legitimate. **The resulting study, conducted by the Mitre Corporation and**

released in July 2003, found no significant interference problems from the newly operating low-power FM stations licensed by the FCC. The Mitre Corporation even went so far as to recommend that the LPFM service be returned to its original scope! And, just this year, the FCC made its recommendation to Congress -- it is time to expand Low Power FM and bring these important radio stations to the people of the United States.

I am asking the FCC to support Low Power FM and base their decision on the results of the study and not on the interests of a few corporations that cannot prove their claims of interference.

Regards,

Elisabeth Gleckler, DrPH