



January 19, 2005

Via Electronic Filing

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: MM Docket No. 99-325
Presentation of National Public Radio, Inc.
Ex Parte Notice**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to Section 1.1200, *et seq.*, of the Commission's Rules, National Public Radio, Inc. ("NPR") hereby notifies the Commission of the following *ex parte* presentation in the above-referenced proceeding.

Today, Mike Starling, NPR Vice President for Engineering, Mike Riksen, NPR Vice President for Government Relations, and the undersigned met separately with Johanna Mikes, of Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein's office, and Monica Desai, of Commissioner Kevin Martin's office, to discuss recent developments in public radio's conversion to digital broadcasting. We emphasized the increasing importance to public radio of immediate authorization of digital audio multicasting.

NPR provided information summarizing Congressional funding provided to public radio stations, through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, for the digital conversion as well as an update on the number of public radio stations that are on the air with digital radio broadcasts and those stations moving in the near-term toward digital operations. Stations are converting to DAB in large numbers, and Congress and CPB have committed substantial funds to stations' DAB conversion, principally because of the multicasting capability of the iBiquity Digital HD technology. NPR noted that public radio stations will quickly implement multicasting operations following action by the Commission authorizing its use. The more quickly the Commission moves to authorize multicasting, the more quickly public radio stations can employ Federal transition dollars to broaden and improve their public service. Additionally, timely authorization action would enable transmitter manufacturers to offer and stations to receive DAB conversion funding to implement technology that both facilitates multicasting and reduces station costs. Conversely, delays in approval of multicasting not only slows the implementation

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Page 2

of programming initiatives to improve public service, but also increases conversion costs for public radio stations.

NPR also discussed its recent activities to utilize new audio features. On New Year's eve 2004, NPR featured, *Toast of the Nation*, its signature New Year's Eve jazz and blues party, transmitted in 5.1 discrete digital surround sound, bringing the home theatre experience to the radio dial for the very first time. The NPR broadcast began with a performance in Paris and concluded 13 hours later with a live broadcast from Oakland, California. Other initiatives discussed included NPR actions to stimulate adoption of HD multicast receivers and to provide new HD Radio program streams covering music and news/talk to NPR member stations.

As it has previously, NPR urges the Commission to move immediately to authorize the use of multicasting. Public radio stations all across the country are prepared to utilize HD Radio technology to expand and improve their public service.

Please direct any questions you may have to the undersigned at 202-513-2050.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Lewis /s/

Gregory A. Lewis
Associate General Counsel