

Dear Members of The Commission: As an AM Broadcaster for over 27 years, I am in favor of anything that can save our medium. At WACQ-AM in Tallahassee, Alabama, our station has been the center of this community since 1979. WACQ is a shining example of what a local broadcast station should be to its city of license. Our daily, locally produced programming gives a forum to the public to voice their opinions about everything from garbage collection and stray dogs, to local school funding. WACQ regularly schedules city elected officials, law enforcement, the Chamber of Commerce, Recreation Department and members of civic clubs to appear live and take "On the Air" phone calls from listeners.

With WACQ-AM, I have taken a lemon and made lemonade. We've done the best we can with what we have, a 1kw, AM signal on a Class 1-A frequency. WACQ's broadcast day is severely limited. Due to protection to KWKH in Shreveport, LA., WACQ doesn't sign on until 6:45AM in the winter months. Our community needs to know about school closings, icing problems on the Tallapoosa River bridge and at times severe weather alerts, but here we sit, waiting on the regulated sign on time before we can pass on critical and at times life-saving information.

Then there's the post sunset power authority and early sign off, especially in the winter. High power is reduced from 1kw to 25 watts at 4:45PM during some winter months. After 30 minutes we cut down to 1.7 watts for the next hour and a half, then WACQ signs off. WACQ doesn't even get afternoon drive at full power in the winter time! Plus, the 1.7 watt coverage is so poor that the station can not be heard at WACQ's downtown studio site, since the tower site is 3 miles east of downtown Tallahassee. This means that only citizens in East Tallahassee get any service at all during this post sunset period.

If FM Translators are permitted for AM stations, the translator tower site should be allowed at either the AM transmitter site or in the center of the community, since many AM towers, like WACQ's, are located some distance from the community's center of population. I would also propose that the audio into the FM Translator be allowed directly from the studio programming source, rather than the "off the air" signal of the AM station. This will greatly improve quality and in the case of daytime-only stations, allow for operation 24 hours per day.

Economically, FM Translators for AM stations would open up a new world of programming for potential sale. High School, College and Professional Sports could come to local communities. WACQ gets complaints constantly about our "delayed" broadcast of High School sports and our inability to broadcast Atlanta Braves Baseball and University of Alabama Football night games. All of these would be substantial revenue producers for WACQ if we could just stay on the air with a marketable signal.

I am very excited that the NAB, Alabama Broadcasters Association and the FCC are apparently moving forward with something positive that will allow AM Broadcasters to stay in business and to better serve their communities. With competition from FM Radio, Satellite Radio, Cable TV and Internet Radio, AM Radio desperately needs a way to compete, thus I wholeheartedly support this petition now before The Commission.

Sincerely,

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