



April 13, 2007

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Presentation; MB Docket No. 07-57

Dear Ms. Dortch,

The League of Rural Voters urges the Commission to approve the proposed merger between XM Radio and Sirius. The combined entity will offer listeners more programming options at lower prices than those currently available from the two companies separately.

Consolidation of the terrestrial radio industry over the last decade has left much of rural America behind in recent years, as locally-owned stations are replaced with the mega-corporate conglomerates which produce homogenized content and so-called local news and weather delivered from offices hundreds of miles away. The emergence of satellite radio has offered listeners in rural areas a robust alternative with hundreds of specialized channels that cater to the programming needs of rural America.

It is in the best interest of rural listeners that satellite radio continues to be a viable option. We note that news reports indicate financial hardships for both Sirius and XM if they attempt to survive as separate entities. We believe this deal will allow the companies to offer services more efficiently, cutting costs while creating additional channel space for even more programming—including channels dedicated to public safety and homeland security. And most important, XM and Sirius contend, if allowed to merge, that they will offer more channels for a lower price than the current cost of both services combined.

Given the persistent digital divide that plagues much of rural America, many of the latest alternatives to terrestrial radio have yet to reach the heartland. Therefore the survival of satellite radio as a competitive alternative is critical. We hope you will look favorably on the XM-Sirius merger.

Sincerely,

Niel Ritchie
League of Rural Voters

cc: Chairman Kevin J. Martin
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

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