

November 2, 2007



Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Notice of Written *Ex Parte* Communication
Docket 04-233

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 1, 2007, I sent the attached email to numerous members of the Commission and its staff.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Andrew Jay Schwartzman

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From: Andrew Schwartzman <andys@mediaaccess.org>
Subject: San Diego Radio
Cc: jmago@nab.org
Bcc: HPd,BL
Attached: C:\DL\KPBS.PDF; C:\DL\NPR26Oct.pdf;

While they did not favor me with a copy of their communication, I understand that my friends at the NAB have objected to my characterization of the absence of local radio origination capacity in the San Diego market.

I attach two articles on which I relied.

In addition, I am told that there is only one significant locally originated news commercial news operation in San Diego, but that it is a fraction of the size of KPBS'. I understand that many stations without their own program origination capacity simulcasted either KPBS or the commercial feed. While such collaboration is laudable under the circumstances, the absence of redundancy poses obvious concerns about public safety and security.

Thus, I stand by my assertion that commercial radio has largely ceded news and public affairs to non-commercial radio. This is true in San Diego and elsewhere.

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10/26/07 NPR Morning Edition (Pg. Unavail. Online)
2007 WLNR 21129750

NPR Morning Edition

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October 26, 2007

KPBS Radio Covers Wildfires Using Many Sources

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

All across Southern California, many people wondered what to do and what they could do that was safe.

NPR's David Folkenflik has this story about a local radio station that was briefly knocked off the air but still became an extraordinary resource.

DAVID FOLKENFLIK: On Sunday, KPBS-FM embarked on what became 75 straight hours of uninterrupted fire coverage, with update stories, listeners' calls, and interviews.

(Soundbite of radio broadcast)

Unidentified Man: What people should know is though that in these times of disaster

FOLKENFLIK: KPBS doesn't have a couple hundred journalists like the Hometown Daily, the Union Tribune, or the flashy choppers of local TV. But it does operate San Diego's dominant NPR member station. And yes, that means it's one of ours, and it's one of the city's last sources of radio news.

As program director John Decker says, fires ravaging the area threatened its transmitter.

Mr. JOHN DECKER (Program Director, KPBS-FM Radio): All of the telephone lines and the power lines that run up the side of the mountain were completely incinerated. We went off the air on Tuesday morning at about 5:30.

FOLKENFLIK: After a call from Decker, officials at a commercial music station decided the best way to serve the public was to broadcast KPBS instead.

KPBS got back on the air on its own frequency a day later. The station's Web staffers were scrambling too. Online managing editor Leng Caloh took inspiration from a fairly new Google application called MyMap. People usually use MyMap to pinpoint things like the best places to play golf or get a drink.

Ms. LENG CALOH (Online Managing Editor, KPBS-FM Radio): The playing that a lot of us on the team do in our free time, I think, has been the key to our success.

FOLKENFLIK: This time, Caloh and KPBS created a virtual map of Southern California speckled with symbols that tell you down to the block what's been burned, where to find shelter, what roads were closed. It was relentlessly updated and became authoritative.

California State Fire Agency doesn't even have its own map but links instead to KPBS. That map has now been viewed well over 1.2 million times.

Google was so impressed that its MyMap project manager, Jessica Lee, was awakened in Tokyo at 3:00 a.m. to talk to me about KPBS.

Ms. JESSICA LEE (Project Manager, MyMap): It's really amazing that they managed to do this. I know they're a small sort of shoestring operation. But if you get people the tools and the technology to do this, you know, they'll do it.

FOLKENFLIK: When users overran the map, Google staffers swung into action to help it run smoothly. KPBS also set up a twitter account that funnels text updates of just a sentence or two to subscribers on mobile phones. About a thousand people took the feed.

Yesterday, KPBS sent out this hopeful note. Except for residents of one development, people throughout the city of San Diego could return to home.

David Folkenflik, NPR News.

---- INDEX REFERENCES ----

INDUSTRY: (Entertainment (1EN08); Traditional Media (1TR30); Radio (1RA81); Radio Stations (1RA51))

REGION: (USA (1US73); Americas (1AM92); North America (1NO39); California (1CA98))

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Friday, October 26, 2007

While a community tenant communications building 10 feet away was completely destroyed, the building that houses the KPBS transmitter was unharmed.

Photo by Ralph Suelzle.

A night view of the fire that burned on Mount San Miguel, which houses a KPBS transmitter. Photo by Ralph Suelzle.

KPBS Radio 89.5

Maintains Constant Fire Coverage despite Transmission Troubles

By Lauren Coarthey

The Harris fire raced up Mount San Miguel in San Diego early Monday, burning through power lines by 5:30 a.m. and cutting power to several transmitters situated at the crest. With no back-up generator, KPBS, the city's public radio station, lost its signal and went off the air.

One of only two local radio news operations, KPBS had become a crucial source of information on the 2007 fires, which were engulfing San Diego from the east. Many city and county officials had been directing the public and their own agencies to 89.5 FM during news conferences.

"Even when we lost our radio transmitter, we kept broadcasting continuously via live Web transmission," said Nancy Worlie, KPBS communications manager.

FM 94.9 Partnership

Knowing thousands of people were looking to the station for critical updates, the radio programming director, John Decker, called several stations for help before alternative rock station FM 94.9 agreed to temporarily carry KPBS' broadcast on their frequency.

"When I got a hold of our friends at 94.9, they said, 'Yes. Absolutely,'" Decker said. "They're a great station, and they really understand the importance of community service. I couldn't be more thankful for what they've done."

Though KPBS-TV Channel 15 also went off the air, service to Time Warner and Cox Cable customers was uninterrupted, since KPBS provides a direct fiber feed from the university to those cable service providers.

Not until Wednesday was Rockley Curless, a KPBS engineer, able to get to the top of Mount San Miguel to check the transmitter. While a community tenant communications building 10 feet away was completely destroyed, the building that houses the KPBS transmitter was unharmed.

"There were even little green plants still around it," said Leon Messenie, director of engineering. "We feel really lucky."

Currently, the TV and radio stations are back on the air, running off of a low-power generator located on the SDSU campus. They will return to full power as soon as San Diego City officials and CAL FIRE approve generator installation on the mountain.

