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March 7, 2008

Via Electronic Filing

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Notice of *Ex Parte* Communications
MB Docket 04-233

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On March 6, 2008, James Yager and Chris Cornelius of Barrington Broadcasting Group, LLC, Jim Conschafter of Media General Broadcast Group, Guy Hempel of Meredith Broadcasting Group (hereinafter, "Broadcasters"), and Jonathan Blake and Jennifer Johnson of Covington & Burling LLP, met with Commission staff to discuss concerns that Broadcasters had with statements in the *Report on Broadcast Localism and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* ("Localism Report") that indicated the Commission's intent to propose rules to "ensure that all cable and satellite subscribers have access to television broadcast stations licensed to communities within the viewers' home state."¹

We held separate meetings with Commissioner McDowell and his media advisor, Christina Chou Pauzé; Commissioner Adelstein and his media advisor, Rudy Brioché; Commissioner Copps and his media advisor, Rick Chessen; and Monica Desai, Eloise Gore, and Rosalee Chiara of the Media Bureau.

Although Broadcasters are not aware of the specifics, the proposals apparently being considered could severely disrupt current local market definitions and carriage arrangements, with destructive consequences on local economies, service to local communities, and localism in general.

We provided copies of Designated Market Area ("DMA") maps to illustrate regions in which high-quality service is provided by stations throughout a DMA even when the DMA crosses state lines (attached as Appendix A). We also used these maps to explain that in-state stations could be far more removed geographically and culturally than closer, out-of-state

¹ *Localism Report*, ¶ 50.

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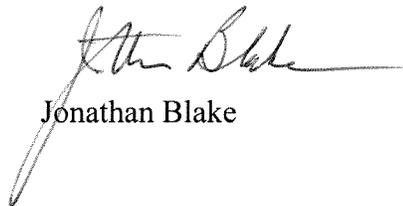
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stations within a given DMA.² Giving priority to in-state/out-of-market stations over out-of-state/in-market stations would have the unintended adverse effects of limiting local communities' access to important emergency information, school closings, weather reports, and local news and political issues. It would substitute an unnecessary, counterproductive regulatory scheme for the present county-by-county system.

Nielsen very carefully examines viewership annually, to assign them to markets based on the established viewing patterns of local communities. Altering current DMAs on the basis of state lines as opposed to real-world communities of interest would have a disastrous effect on the public's current television service and its financial foundations. We also provided Ms. Pauzé with more detailed information about Nielsen's market-assignment procedures (attached as Appendix B).³

The attached Appendices were used during these meetings.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Blake

Attachments

cc: Hon. Jonathan S. Adelstein
Hon. Michael J. Copps
Hon. Robert M. McDowell
Rudy Brioche
Rick Chessen
Rosalee Chiara
Monica Desai
Eloise Gore
Christina Chou Pauzé

² For example, Boise City in the Oklahoma panhandle receives service from stations based in Amarillo, Texas, 100 miles away (within its local DMA market). It is 370 miles from Oklahoma City, whose stations, understandably, provide it with little service.

³ The packet of materials we provided in our meeting with Commissioner McDowell and Ms. Pauzé inadvertently included two documents that are irrelevant pages from the 2005 edition of the TV & Cable Factbook (pages A-1263 and A-1265). Because of their irrelevance, and to avoid confusion, we have not included these pages in the attached Appendices to this *ex parte* notice.