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April 28, 2008
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554
Re: Comments on Broadcast Localism; Docket 04-233

Dear FCC:

I am the technical lead of a new applicant for a full power station "Flint Acorn" in last October's window. We are in an MX group with 5 others. Our application is the only one promising local programming. We are ready to build and could probably be in the air in a few months, if we could get a license now.

Flint is an old manufacturing city with a depressed economy. The only local non-commercial radio we have is one college LPFM station. There are several full power NCE stations licensed to Flint and its neighbors including Burton, but none of them carry any local programming.

There is a significant difference between commercial and non-commercial stations from the viewpoint of localism. Non-commercial radio should be all about localism, and so held to a much higher standard than commercial radio.

Commercial stations exist to make money, or to promote the mission of sponsors. This is known and accepted. I believe they should be allowed to continue as they are.

Non-commercial spectrum is, or should be, public property, and be allocated first to local organizations. The difference between commercial and non-commercial should be not necessarily in whether or not the licensee is qualified as a non-profit organization, but in its commitment to the community. Any station with a non-commercial

license should be required to demonstrate this commitment to the community. They should be given freedom to choose how they will demonstrate such commitment.

Unfortunately, the current situation is that many local community groups would like to have a radio station, but cannot either because no channels are available, because of freezes on getting a license, or because of requirements that artificially inflate the cost.

With this in mind, large national broadcasters with many stations and no local input should be treated as commercial stations in every way, including being licensed in the non-restricted part of the band, and in paying the fees that commercial stations pay.

Non-commercial, free, licenses should be restricted to organizations that can show that they have a non-commercial interest in the community of license. That is, to truly provide local service, not as an outreach arm for a non-local organization, even if that organization is non-commercial.

Some non-commercial goals might include:

1. A radio station owned by a school providing coverage to the community where its students live.

2. A church providing coverage to the community of its own congregation.

3. A community group, such as a music society, arts organization, or social help organization, in its own community.

4. A chamber of commerce, in its home town.

5. Local organizations that are predominately volunteer, with many volunteers from the community.

In contrast, the following situations should be considered to be commercial, whether or not the organizations are non-profit.

1. A school or university, to a locality beyond where students and faculty can reasonably commute to the school.

2. A national organization of any kind, regardless of their goals.

3. A community group that focuses on some other community that is not the covered area.

4. Most stations with main studio waivers should be considered to be commercial, but there are exceptions.

5. Local "organizations" of just a few people, who are paid a salary instead of profit.

If there were an abundance of radio channels, there would be no issue. Since there is a shortage of channels, there should be a rule that requires equitable distribution of spectrum. The number of stations run by any organization should be limited so that local organizations are never shut out. In many cases, it is reasonable to allow only one non-commercial station per licensee. If any licensee wants more than one, they can go commercial.

The main exception to this is in regions that cannot be covered effectively by a single transmitter, such as a mountain region with low population. In another filing, I made a proposal for the concept of a "composite station" that would allow a group of transmitters to be considered to be a single station, provided they cover a region that is thought of as a single region with a unique geography and culture.

In summary, large organizations with more that a few stations, or with out of town interests, should be considered to be commercial regardless of whether or not they are non-profit. If the operation of the radio station appears to have a commercial motive, it should be considered to be commercial, even if the organization is officially non-profit.