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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

07-57

MB
XM/Sirius
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June 27, 2008

FILED/ACCEPTED

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

1168

The Honorable Kevin Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I understand that the FCC is considering a proposal that, as part of the XM-Sirius merger, would set aside four percent of the combined entity's channels for non-commercial educational (NCE) use and an additional four percent for minority and women broadcasters. While I welcome your support for such a set-aside, the combined eight percent currently contemplated is, in my view, not enough to serve the public interest and ensure a viable, independent and diverse broadcast media. Should the FCC approve the XM/Sirius merger, I urge the Commission to set aside more spectrum for the public interest, including devoted public safety spectrum, than is discussed in the current proposal.

There is strong precedent for a much larger set-aside than eight percent: when FM radio was in its infancy in 1945, the FCC allocated 20 percent of the FM band (88-92 MHz) for NCE use. Indeed, the robust non-commercial band currently available on FM radio is a direct result of the Commission's foresight over 60 years ago. Similar foresight is needed today. By dedicating a significant block of the satellite radio spectrum to public interest programming, the FCC can help ensure that satellite radio - a relatively new and important communications medium - contains a diversity of voices and opinions.

As you know, public broadcasting provides a valuable service to our communities, offering listeners independent news and cultural content as well as a forum for voices and perspectives not otherwise available on mainstream, commercial media. It is important that the FCC ensure that these voices are heard on satellite radio. Accordingly, as you proceed with consideration of the XM/Sirius merger, I urge you to reconsider the proposed eight percent set-aside and stipulate that the new

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XM/Sirius entity set aside a greater percentage of the satellite spectrum for public interest broadcasting.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amy Klobuchar in black ink.

Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator

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