



March 24, 2014

Chairman Tom Wheeler  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: MB Docket No. 09-182, MB Docket No. 07-294

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We write to support your proposals to tighten the media ownership rules as proposed in this docket. In particular, we write to clarify that we fundamentally disagree with arguments that legal agreements to combine broadcast operations in order to avoid the Commission's ownership caps could aid diversity. Media consolidation eliminates opportunities for diversity; agreements to combine operations have the same effect.

To understand why this is the case, it is important to recognize that a critical reason why our organizations support media diversity is because diverse owners enable communities that have historically low access to capital to create wealth. Agreements that transfer the vast majority of the value of a station to the larger company do little to further the goals of media diversity. Similarly, shared services agreements (SSAs), result in duplicated programming and fewer journalists rather than more local programming to serve unique audiences and more independent local news.

For this reason, the suggestion that the Commission must study the benefits to diversity from jointly operated stations does not recognize the benefits diversity is intended to foster. Whereas the Commission clearly is required to explain why permitting *more* consolidation would not harm its pro-diversity goals because those goals are inherently in tension with one another, the converse is not true.

In particular, we write to emphasize that we support the Commission's proposal to attribute joint sales agreements (JSAs). It is our shared expectation that any waivers granted will be limited in duration--not extending noncompliance beyond five years of the adoption date of this order. Moreover, to obtain a waiver, a licensee should describe any prior steps taken toward achieving full operational independence and propose a plan toward actually achieving that independence within the waiver period. Waivers should be strictly enforced and include compliance reporting at regular intervals. Such a waiver process will only be effective if the Commission is scrupulous in obtaining full disclosure of contract terms and financial interests or incentives.

We strongly encourage you to go farther than the current plans to attribute only JSAs and to take immediate action on SSAs. To fully understand the dependence and financial incentives of jointly

operated stations, the Commission must look at the full picture. Moreover, as discussed above, the shared service agreements are more problematic when one considers the compelling governmental interest in promoting multiple points of view and access to news and information.

Finally, we strongly urge you move quickly to adopt policies that will improve the likelihood that women and people of color have a chance to purchase any stations that might be unwound once the new attribution rules come into effect.

While minor details may have led to the perception that the advocates for media diversity disagree about the core of the Commission's proposed order, we hope that this letter demonstrates it is not the case. We urge you to vote improve competition, localism and diversity.

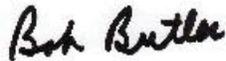
Sincerely,



Cheryl A. Leanza  
Policy Advisor  
United Church of Christ, OC Inc.



James L. Winston  
Executive Director and General Counsel  
National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, Inc.



Bob Butler  
President  
National Association of Black Journalists

Cc: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly