



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

October 25, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

We are writing to express our concerns over recent media reports indicating that you intend to rapidly advance a proceeding to relax or abolish a number of the current rules governing broadcast station ownership.

In comments published October 18, 2007, in the *New York Times*, you stated that, "it is an appropriate time to begin a discussion to complete this rule-making and complete these media ownership issues." We agree that the Commission should continue to review media ownership issues in light of recent changes in the media marketplace. Such examination, however, must be done in a full and open manner, and ensure that localism and media diversity are not harmed in the process.

Since 2004, the Commission has maintained an open proceeding on localism in media. To date, however, the Commission has failed to issue a report or a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on this issue. We feel that that issue of localism – and particularly the relationship between ownership and local news and public affairs coverage – must be addressed in a separate proceeding before the Commission moves forward with any new media ownership rules.


Furthermore, the FCC should also complete its review of the recommendations issued by the Commission's Advisory Committee on Diversity. It is our understanding that a number of recommendations from this committee as well as a set of proposals from the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council are pending at the Commission. These recommendations all deserve serious consideration prior to a wholesale review of the national media ownership rules.

Once these proceedings are addressed, the Commission should provide an NPRM on both the localism and diversity proceedings, and allow a suitable period (60 to 90 days) to allow the public to comment on these critical issues. Only then will the Commission have the tools to move forward with a complete media ownership review.

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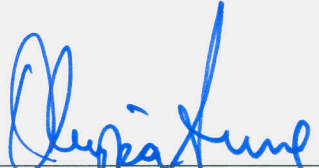
As you know, the General Accounting Office (GAO) recently released a study indicating that industry stakeholders and lobbyists were given advance notice of proposed FCC rulemakings. The future of media ownership is a critical issue, and requires a completely transparent process. Accordingly, we urge you to complete the long-standing localism and diversity proceedings prior to addressing the larger media ownership issues.

Sincerely,



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Bill Nelson



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Olympia J. Snowe