



October 29, 2007

Dear Members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

On behalf of Free Press and its more than 350,000 members and activists, I write to urge you to support S.1675, the bipartisan Local Community Radio Act of 2007, during its scheduled full committee markup on Oct.30. The legislation, introduced by Senators Maria Cantwell and John McCain, will help increase the number of Low Power FM (LPFM) stations in our country.

LPFM refers to community-based, nonprofit radio stations that operate at 100 watts or less and have a broadcast reach of only a few miles. Given its local and noncommercial nature, LPFM stations help provide information and perspectives crucial to specific communities that are often ignored by mainstream radio. They are uniquely positioned to meet local needs by:

- Strengthening community identity in neighborhoods, rural towns and other communities that are too small to attract much attention from mainstream news outlets.
- Providing opportunities for people of color and women to run local radio stations and work in radio programming because of its low costs and barrier to entry.
- Providing unique outlets for diverse local constituencies such as churches, musicians, and farmers to exchange news, information, or entertainment.
- Providing essential emergency services for local communities during times of crisis.

Since Congress first authorized LPFM stations in 2000, the Federal Communications Commission has awarded more than 800 LPFM licenses to civil rights organizations, schools and church groups. S. 1675 will open the radio dial to thousands more new LPFM stations while protecting incumbent broadcasters from interference. Opening up LPFM stations is about bringing much needed local voices to the airwaves, strengthening community discourse, and enhancing the overall level of media diversity in our nation. I therefore strongly urge you to support S. 1675.

Sincerely,

s/Ben Scott
Policy Director
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