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February 9, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

*Mr
Bless Genachowski
2/10*

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We are writing to encourage the Commission to solicit additional feedback from the public on the agency's recent proposal to relax its media ownership protections. We believe that the proposed loosening of media ownership rules deserves a full and proper public field hearing with the full Commission in attendance. It is critical that the agency's chief decision makers hear directly from the public and stakeholders outside of the Washington DC regarding how the proposed rule changes may affect the local media landscape.

In particular, we note that the Seattle market is one that would be impacted by the Commission's proposed revision to the newspaper broadcast cross ownership rule. The Seattle media market is ranked #12 in the nation and falls within the delineation point chosen by the Commission to allow greater consolidation of local TV stations and daily newspapers. This type of consolidation also has the potential to create additional hurdles for female and minority owners – already severely underrepresented in Seattle and across the Nation. With such dramatic consequences at stake for the people of Washington, we invite you and your fellow Commissioners to attend a hearing in Seattle in the coming months.

While the Commission's practice of holding local hearings on this issue is well-established, it has yet to hold similar public hearings in the context of the 2010 media ownership proceeding. During the 2006 media ownership review, the Commission held no less than half a dozen official hearings across the country with the full Commission in attendance. In 2006 and 2007, the city of Seattle hosted two well-attended public events on the issue of media ownership rules where a wealth of passionate testimony was provided.

As you may be aware, the 2007 hearing in Seattle was met with considerable criticism because the Commission provided only five days notice and conducted no community outreach to encourage attendance by the public. Moreover, it ultimately came to light that former Chairman Martin had already decided to relax the media ownership rules even before the 2007 Seattle hearing was held. As a consequence, the Commission received a sharp rebuke from the U.S.

Court of Appeals that last summer threw out the FCC's decision to relax its cross-ownership rule.

We urge you not to repeat these past mistakes and invite the full Commission to attend a Seattle hearing on this issue in early April or early May of this year. We are extending this invitation well in advance so that adequate time and notice can be provided to give the people of Seattle a meaningful opportunity to attend and participate in a hearing on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of our invitation and we look forward to your visit in the near future.

Sincerely,



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senate



JAY INSLEE
United States Congress

cc:

Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn