DIANA DEGETTE
1ST DISTRICT, COLORADO

2335 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4431
FAX (202) 225-5657

DISTRICT OFFICE:
600 GRANT STREET, SUITE 202
DENVER, CO 80203
(303) 844-4988
FAX (303)844-4996

http://degette.house.gov

# Congress of the United States
## House of Representatives
### Washington, DC 20515-4329

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
VICE CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INSULAR AFFAIRS, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE

October 25, 2011

1491

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As the Federal Communications Commission continues working on the quadrennial review of its media ownership rules, I want to bring to your attention a troubling development in the Colorado media market that could have a profound effect the production of news and the variety of independent information available to the people of Colorado.

In my Congressional District, which includes the Denver media market, local channels that used to compete to provide independent news are now jointly producing stories and, in some cases, airing identical newscasts through shared service agreements. In a local community where television broadcast stations cannot formally merge under the FCC's current ownership rules, they are achieving similar synergies by entering into these agreements and consolidating their operations, staff, and news production.

These activities are a contributing factor to the statistic cited in the Commission's May 25, 2010, Notice of Inquiry – highlighting the finding that local television has cut over 1,600 jobs—roughly 6% of its workforce—over the last two years. Local journalists, broadcast engineers, and other station employees have been laid-off. These job losses adversely impact working men and women in the community, as well as the local audiences they once served by covering local news and public affairs, and by reporting on natural disasters and other emergency situations.

Regardless of this development and its potential causes, my hope is the Commission will not endorse a further weakening of the local television ownership limit. Because of this development in my own District, I would like information about how the Commission intends to analyze the impact of these rules in general, but specifically how they allow for these shared service agreements.

As the Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, information about the pervasiveness of these agreements and how they impact the future of localism and diversity in media ownership is important to my work and my

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

constituents. The worst recession in decades should not be a justification for increased media concentration based upon a need for increased profits to maintain operations, and the Commission should analyze acceptable outcomes for media ownership with a keen focus on the influence of recessionary economic data.

The public overwhelmingly relies on local television for investigative journalism to shed light on critical issues in their community, give them the news they need to engage in the democratic process and to provide emergency information. As the FCC proceeds with its review of existing media ownership rules, I urge you to consider the impact these types of arrangements may have on the availability of local information and jobs. Consistent with the agency's duty to promote the public interest, it is imperative that the Commission not only enforce its existing rules, but also ensure that it pursues policies that promote access to independent and competing news sources for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette