

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Expanding Access to Radio Presentation* (June 13, 2014)

The history of low power FM radio has a lot in common with a familiar tale. That's because the story of low power FM is the story of *The Little Engine That Could*.

It begins at the turn of the millennium. In 2000, the Commission first authorized the creation of low power FM stations to provide noncommercial, educational, and local groups with the opportunity to provide a community-based radio service. But that same year, Congress passed legislation delaying the removal of third-adjacent channel separation requirements and requiring the agency to study interference issues just a little more. That might sound like a small thing. But it had big impact, limiting the agency's ability to issue licenses for community broadcasting, especially in urban areas. So the low power FM locomotive was stopped in its tracks with tough terrain ahead.

But a stalwart group of legislators fought to change the law. Senator Cantwell, Senator McCain, Representative Doyle, and Representative Terry banded together and developed legislation to change those restrictive adjacent channel requirements and make it possible for low power FM stations to be heard everywhere. So, over the course of not one, not two, but three successive Congresses, the Local Community Radio Act was introduced, introduced again, and introduced again. The third try was the charm. I know, because I spent quite a bit of my time as staff on the Senate Commerce Committee helping get this legislation over hills and signed into law.

So, as the story goes, hard work and optimism has its rewards. The bipartisan group of legislators who disregarded the naysayers and thought they could do more with low power FM—actually did. I think it was worth the effort. Because there is something special about a voice in the air. One that rises above the din and provides local radio with unique character. And in these days of exploding global online content, there is still great value and art in community broadcasting.

With more low power FM, we are going to hear more of that local character. Just this week, I got the privilege to speak to KWEM in West Memphis, a new station with an historic call sign that is bringing rockabilly and blues back to its home along the Mississippi River. I also spoke to KPYT in Tucson, which serves the Pascau Yaqui tribe and provides programming that sustains its unique language, traditions, and culture. So low power FM possibilities are powerful—and at long last, the legal framework for its expansion is in place. I, for one, can't wait to hear this little engine roar.