

Senator Cantwell, Chairman Inouye and Members of the Committee,
I'm Carol Pierson the President and CEO of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.

Today I'm speaking on behalf of Community Radio and our project Native Public Media. NFCB has been representing and providing services to Community Radio stations for over 30 years.

Nearly half of our stations are controlled by people of color and 40% serve rural areas of the country. Many of the new Low Power FM stations are also members.

I have submitted detailed testimony about the importance of community and native radio, the problems of media consolidation, the need to expand LPFM, new technology-driven radio platforms. I just want to emphasize my major points.

I'm very happy that the Committee is holding this hearing on the Future of Radio. This is a critical time for radio in this country.

Radio is thriving on the noncommercial side. In many areas the community or public radio station is the only locally owned, and in some cases, the only station with local staff. In emergency situations this can be critical, and it is why NFCB is working with NPR to be sure that all of the community and public radio stations are prepared to provide emergency information to their listeners. We have seen during recent emergencies the critical role that radio plays and I have attached a letter from a number of emergency management directors on how important they feel a local LPFM station can be.

Community radio stations are also expanding their services through webcasting, enhanced web content, and other new technologies. It is critical that regulations and fees for use of these new technologies recognize the budgetary and staffing limitations of community radio while recognizing that artists should get paid for their work.

At the same time, there are many people in this country that don't have an opportunity to own a radio station or even hear their issues covered on existing stations. We need more community radio stations. The most immediate way to do this is to expand Low Power FM stations into urban areas. This requires Congress to authorized the FCC to license LPFM stations closer to existing stations—a technology that has been shown to work.

We know that the consolidation in radio ownership has left local, women and minority owners out in the cold. This is no time to further loosen ownership rules. The FCC must re-affirm the historic regulatory priorities of localism, competition and diversity.

The other major area I want to tell you about is Native Public Media. With a generous grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NFCB was able to create a Center to expand and support media in Indian Country. Currently there are 33 public radio stations serving Native American communities. We are hoping to nearly double that number in

the filing window that the FCC recently opened. But there is a great need to increase this service. If you go to a Reservation that has a radio station, you will find almost everyone listening to it. It is the ideal medium to preserve the culture and language, discuss local issues, and to provide health, education, and emergency services.

We have discovered through consultation with Native American leaders that complete information does not exist about where in Indian Country it is possible to put a radio station and where new technologies will be the way to provide a locally owned media service. Native Public Media is trying to launch a research project that will pull together the research that exists and fill in the gaps with new research.

In summary, radio as a platform for communication and information is, in many ways, stronger than it has ever been. Congress should look for strategies that bring localism back to commercial radio, encourage diversity of ownership, expand and protect community radio – including LPFM – and ensure that new technology-driven radio platforms are able to succeed.

I'm glad to answer any questions that you have. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.