

PROMETHEUS RADIO PROJECT

PO Box 42158 Philadelphia, PA 19101 (215)727-9620
info@prometheusradio.org, www.prometheusradio.org



For Release: Wednesday, March 9th:

Contact Pete Tridish or Hannah Sassaman, 215.727.9620, petri@prometheusradio.org

Contact Harold Feld, 202.232.4300, hfeld@mediaaccess.org

LOW POWER FM ADVOCATES FIGHT TO PRESERVE SLOTS FOR LOCAL BROADCASTS *In Wake of Noncommercial License Trafficking, Advocates Ask FCC to Freeze Translator Applications*

Upon learning that three individuals have improperly obtained some 4,000 FM non-commercial radio station authorizations free of charge for the purpose of resale for profit, a coalition of Low Power FM (LPFM) radio advocates have filed an emergency petition calling upon the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to impose an immediate national freeze on the authorization of new FM translator stations. The groups explained that each permit which is misappropriated in this scheme for importing the programming of a distant radio station deprives a community of the opportunity to create a new, community based LPFM station.

The petition was filed today by Media Access Project on behalf of the Prometheus Radio Project, the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc., REC Networks, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, the Future of Music Coalition and Free Press. Based on research conducted by REC Networks, the filing demonstrates that in March 2003, two front companies applied for at least 4,000 FM “translators” -- licenses that are intended for the rebroadcast of local signals in communities where geographic contours prevented a station from reaching its full community of license -- in 2003. Rather than use these authorizations, obtained for free, to serve local communities throughout the country, the companies, Radio Assist Ministry, Inc., and Edgewater Broadcasting, Inc., have placed them on sale, using another front company, World Radio Link, Inc., in clear violation of FCC “anti-trafficking policies” which prohibit commerce in such “naked” construction permits.

The three companies are controlled by Clark Parrish, Earl Williamson and Diana Atkin of Twin Falls, Idaho.

Prometheus Radio Project founder Pete Tridish explained that “The FCC did a great thing by giving churches, schools, labor organizations, and other community groups the right to take their messages to the airwaves, in a time of massive media consolidation. But unless it stops these speculators from grabbing up these licenses, truly local groups won’t be able to build radio stations for their own cities and towns. Chairman Powell has expressed support for the LPFM service, and we hope he will agree that the FCC should act now to expand and promote community radio.”

Sakura Saunders, an LPFM broadcaster at KDRT-LP in Davis, California, is confident that “the FCC will do the right thing” and assure that people like her will be able to serve their communities. She was an invited panelist at the FCC’s recent “LPFM Day,” where she spoke in detail about the problem translators posed to the LPFM service. “We’re asking the FCC to stop granting translator construction permits while they can look into this,” said Saunders, a journalist and deejay who has trained dozens of volunteers at this well-beloved community station at the University of California at Davis.

Former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani, who now serves as Managing Director of the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, Inc., said that “I’ve met with many UCC members and members of other religious denominations who would love to take advantage of Low Power FM radio to serve their local communities. It is regrettable for sham groups have attempted to unjustly enrich themselves by speculating on government licenses while robbing local church members of their chance to reach their communities.”

To learn more, visit <http://www.prometheusradio.org/fourteenandahalfways.pdf>, or call 215.727.9620.