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Document 1 of 1

Consolidation antidote

Publication info: Rochester Democrat and Chronicle [Rochester, N.Y] 24 Jan 2000: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

Abstract:

[...] at a time of unprecedented consolidation of ownership and constriction of choice in American radio, credit the FCC with making a bold move to keep the market open.

Full text:

Rules allowing low-power FM stations might spur competition in merger-happy radio industry.

Despite intense pressure from the giant media conglomerates that now own most of the radio stations across the nation, the Federal Communications Commission adopted rules last week that could spur competition.

The agency will allow 1,000 low-power FM stations to take to the airwaves, giving community groups,

churches, underserved populations, small businesses and individuals a way to reach local audiences. The new rules will help, in a small way, to counteract the negative impacts of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996, which has led to massive consolidation in the radio industry.

But industry giants Clear Channel and Infinity Broadcasting and others needn't fear these low-wattage stations with ranges of less than seven miles.

The new stations will merely provide some diversity of programming, opinion and news coverage for local audiences.

The nation's commercial broadcasters have fought the new FCC rule and might mount a legal challenge. They argue that the low-power stations, positioned between high-power stations on the radio dial, will cause interference with their signals.

But another unspoken concern is likely that the little stations will eat into the big owners' near-monopolies in many communities.

Certainly, if the new stations prove to cause interference with existing signals, the FCC will have to rethink its plans.

But at a time of unprecedented consolidation of ownership and constriction of choice in American radio, credit the FCC with making a bold move to keep the market open. Entertainment; Radio; Religion; Churches; Business; Small Business; Education; School Northeast

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