

Susan Crawford
Kevin Werbach
President-Elect Obama FCC Transition Review Team
Washington, DC

December 19, 2008

Dear Ms. Crawford and Mr. Werbach:

Please accept our sincere congratulations to President-Elect Obama on his election as President of the United States. We celebrate this momentous election and look forward to a bright future under his leadership. Clearly, the torch has passed to a new generation of leaders who agree that diversity, localism, and inclusion are critical to a successful open democracy.

The landscape that they inherit is one in which 1/2 of 1% of programming on commercial media is devoted to local public affairs. On a walk down Main Street in many towns you'll find that the only local television channel is a Public, Education, or Government (PEG) channel produced by a PEG access center. It's the go-to place for emergency alerts, community festivals, health education, school closing information and local election debates.

Recent Video Franchise Orders issued by the FCC have severely weakened community media and PEG access centers. These orders strip away local authority, weaken consumer protections, limit build-out, and undermine PEG access. The erosion of local franchising authority undermines the provision of PEG. The establishment of an unreasonably short shot clock with a deemed granted provision negates Congress' intention that community needs and interests are fully considered as part of the video franchising process. As cable operators opt into new state laws, we're seeing a reduction in pre-existing PEG obligations of incumbents, like studio closures in Michigan, Indiana and, most recently, in Los Angeles.

Unless there are legislative and regulatory changes at the federal level, PEG Access is at risk of being damaged beyond recovery or dismantled in many states and localities.

Critical times call for exceptional leadership. As the President and the FCC Transition Team considers candidates for the FCC Chairmanship, we ask that the following qualifications/characteristics be considered:

- Commitment to diversity, localism, and inclusion;
- Willingness to operate in an open, transparent environment;
- Commitment to protecting local control, and promoting non-commercial community media and programming;
- Supportive of equal treatment for PEG, including signal quality functionality, and placement;
- Willingness to enforce compliance with the law;
- Ability to create an efficient public-service oriented organization.

We look forward to working with the Obama administration, the Transition Team and the FCC. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Regards,



Helen Soulé, PhD
Executive Director
Alliance for Community Media

