

## **Low Power Radio Concerns Addressed: National Public Radio Receives Full and Fair Response from the FCC**



The Federal Communications Commission took considerable care to adopt a conservative, carefully crafted low power radio service. Despite this care, National Public Radio alleged that the FCC insufficiently protected current broadcasts from interference. **On September 28, 2000, the FCC definitively addressed these concerns.**

- **The FCC grandfathered all reading for the blind services.**
  - The FCC's prior interference rules will apply to radio reading services for the visually impaired. Thus, no low power radio stations will be authorized on a channel third adjacent to a radio reading service.
  - New reading for the blind services will be taken into account when the FCC designates the next series of application windows.
- **The FCC created a clear, fair complaint procedure to address the remote possibility that significant interference occurs.**
  - The process is initiated if the lesser of 30 individuals or 1% of the full power stations' audience experience interference.
  - The low power station is specifically obligated to address any complaints. If they are not addressed, the FCC must address the problem within 90 days.
  - The FCC specifically reserves the right to alter or withdraw low power radio licenses if interference is not resolved through other means.
  - This procedure is unique among broadcast services at the FCC, and holds low power radio stations to a standard not applied to any other service.
- **The FCC protected the signals that supply translators which extend public radio signals into rural or hard-to-reach areas.**
  - Low power radio stations will be required to shut down immediately if a translator demonstrates that a low power station interferes with its input signal.
- **NPR stations' special characteristics are taken into account.**
  - The FCC's conservative spacing criteria automatically places fewer low power stations in the non-commercial band only where there is room for them.
  - The nuanced sounds from "lightly processed" signals offered by many NPR affiliates are only detectable in the highest quality equipment—the equipment that will have no problem with low power radio signals.