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September 14, 2006

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

We are writing with respect to revelations that a report developed by Commission staff in 2004 addressing localism in the media was suppressed. As you well know, the Commission's media ownership rules, adopted in 2003, in the absence of this report in the official record of the proceeding, were highly controversial.

In the aftermath of adoption of the rules, criticism about the lack of data analyzing diversity and localism in the media ownership rules was widespread. In addition, the contention that the new rules seriously undermined these important communications policy values, led former Chairman Michael K. Powell to subsequently agree to hold localism meetings and further examine this issue. It was during this timeframe that Commission staff apparently began developing the report that has recently come to light.

A key finding of this missing report allegedly contradicts directly many of former Chairman Powell's assertions regarding the effect of local ownership on news and information for the American public. We understand, for instance, that the report specifically notes that local ownership adds almost 5 and one-half minutes of local news and over 3 minutes of local on-location news to a half-hour local news broadcast. Obviously, a report with such data and findings would have been highly relevant to the Commission's ownership proceedings.

When questioned before the Senate last Tuesday by Senator Boxer (D-CA), you responded that you had never seen this report when you were a Commissioner. That such information and data might have been withheld from you and your fellow FCC Commissioners, who at that time were tasked with developing and voting upon critical media ownership rules and their effect on localism and diversity, is a disservice to the Commission, the Congress, and the American public.

We request that you examine the circumstances surrounding the suppression of this report. In addition, we request that you please forward to us a copy of this report and promptly post a copy of the report on the Commission's website as a way of

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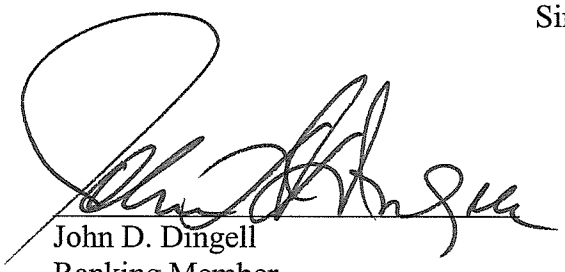
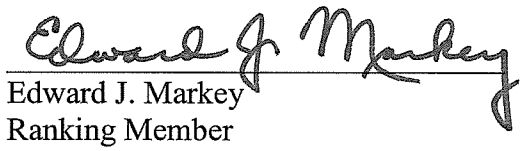
demonstrating that the Commission is committed to fully airing facts and views on issues of vital importance to communications policy and our democracy.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention in responding to this matter.

Sincerely,



John D. Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Edward J. Markey
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