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### **Oral Submission - Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2015-421**

1. Hello, my name is Barry Rooke and I am the Executive Director of the National Campus and Community Radio Association, or "NCRA". With me to my right is Luke Smith, the NCRA's Membership Coordinator. To the left is Francella Fiallos, the NCRA's National Advertising Coordinator. We want to thank you for the opportunity to present today, as well as recognize we are on unceded Algonquin land.

2. As you know, the NCRA is an association of mostly English-language not-for-profit radio stations committed to volunteer-driven, community oriented radio across Canada. Our goals are to ensure stability and support for local campus and community radio stations and to promote long-term growth and effectiveness in the sector. Our mandate also highlights the importance of promoting the participation and engagement of underrepresented groups within community media. We currently represent 95 broadcasters which are community-owned and controlled, enable public access, and deliver high quality programming with financial support from the communities they serve, the Community Radio Fund of Canada, and other granting bodies. We are here today as part of the larger community media sector, which shares a focus with community television on local content and community access. Our comments are based on the best practices in our sector that we feel are applicable to the community television sector.

3. We believe the mandates of community TV and community radio are similar in that the structure of both contemplates participation by the audience and the needs, values and goals of the communities the stations serve. By enabling community members to control and participate in creating the content, the programming becomes a reflection of the communities served.

4. The NCRA recognizes the importance of community broadcasters having physical spaces where community members can work together to produce local programming. Without a physical space, many people wouldn't have access to the equipment, knowledge or resources necessary to produce meaningful and locally relevant content, particularly under-served community members, like people with disabilities, learning or cognitive impairments, or addictions. Some people also require extra training by staff or more experienced volunteers.

5. For example, CJPE-FM is a new FM station serving Prince Edward County, Ontario. It's the only radio station in this widely-dispersed rural area, and has grown from a 2011 idea to a social space that brings 80+ volunteers together to develop 120+ hours of programming each week. Prince Edward County is a retirement location and the station plays an key role in connecting many otherwise isolated seniors within the greater community. Their physical space provides seniors and members of disadvantaged social groups with access to training and learning opportunities, and opportunities to be involved in local affairs by producing local news and other community programming. The station had over 5000 people come through their physical space in the first year of existence.

6. With respect to the Commission's January 12th Notice of hearing and working document for discussion, we have a few comments:

7. First, we define local programming based on current or target AM or FM signal range. Our members apply this definition even when they broadcast over the internet and could reach a much larger audience outside that signal range. This is because focusing on the area in and around their signal range is an effective means for stations to bring people together and encourage dialogue and community building. It also helps them determine which news and information will be most relevant to the bulk of their listeners, and which issues require discussion and analysis in public affairs programming. In our sector, community members themselves who live within a station's signal range play a crucial role in making these decisions and creating or curating programming they feel is relevant.

8. We define access programming as programming created by and for community members, usually with training and support by station staff or other volunteers. Our members are particularly adept at this and most of their programming would fit this definition. In recent years, new technologies enable the expansion of access programming to include submissions by community members produced outside the station and even outside the radio broadcast area.

9. Our sector also promotes the representation of traditionally underserved groups, like gender and sexual minorities and people of colour. Some stations do not have the physical and financial resources to develop target programming by and for these listeners. The NCRA runs a community radio programming exchange that is used by our stations to share access programming that they produce. When produced by other stations it's not considered "local", but it is consumed by niche markets at a local level.

10. In our opinion, good community programming involves diverse voices and languages and is a balance of local programming and niche programming developed for underrepresented groups. It also entails engaging with community members directly to determine community needs and interests to inform which programming content is most appropriate for its listeners. Stations often do this via individuals or committees who oversee and analyze the need for content types and genres, and ensure that the proper programming balance is met. Additionally, the NCRA received funding to support the distribution of sector-produced niche programming, as the Community Radio Fund of Canada (or "CRFC") recently supported an update to the community radio programming exchange. This has seen a 200% increase in traffic within the last month of it going live. Support to make these updates would not have been possible without funding opportunities at the association level.

11. With respect to the Commission's invitation for proposals for a third party fund to support local news, we note that large and established NCRA member stations produce significant local news programming. For example, CFEP-FM in Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia completes ten newscasts per weekday, seven on Saturdays and two on Sundays. Each newscast is five minutes long and includes sports and weather, and individual community programmers are encouraged to update their listeners as breaking news and environmental incidents occur. However CFEP-FM is a larger, stable station with a strong financial foundation that allows the station to develop news reporting without external funding.

12. Unlike CFEP-FM, the majority of our sector finds it very challenging to create locally relevant and reflective news programming without stable and adequate

funding sources because this type of programming is very labour intensive and requires considerable training and resources.

13. We highlight the CRFC as it has assisted our members in achieving local programming goals. It's significant that over fifty percent of the stations receiving CRFC funding are in areas with a population of less than 50,000, where resources, funds, and broadcasting expertise are scarce. Yet on average they provide around 350 hours of training and an additional 550 hours of coaching per year with very limited staff, which is necessary to enable the production of high quality local programming. CRFC funding often helps them do that. Stations like CHHA-AM, a Spanish-language community station in Toronto, CKMS-FM in Waterloo, CKAR-FM in Huntsville have identified the need for local news content on their schedules, and ran projects in 2015 funded by the CRFC to develop their news capacity. We encourage the Commission to ensure that news funding sources are made available to licensed broadcasters, as many communities do not have access to television, but are tightly connected by their community radio networks.

14. Finally, our colleagues at AMARC which is the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, recently attended the International Seminar on Community Media Sustainability: Strengthening Policies and Funding, which was hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or UNESCO. The event in Paris brought together regulators and community media practitioners from all over the world and resulted in 37 recommendations. We believe that some of these recommendations support the comments we've made today.

15. For example, one recommendation calls for the creation of funds to support community media (2, ii ). Another calls on governments to adopt measures to support the rollout of community media services to underserved areas (2, iii) and recommendation 8 asks regulators to promote the engagement of women, young people, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups in the community media sector.

16. The NCRA believes that community engagement and ownership are paramount to operating effective community broadcasters. Stable funding is also essential for community media to fulfill its mandate and adapt to changes. I hope our insight can help the Commission in developing policy for community TV.

17. Thank you and we look forward to any questions you may have.

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