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Robert A. Morin  
Secretary General  
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2

September 26, 2009

**Re: Application # 2009-0996-3  
ROGERS BROADCASTING LIMITED  
Saltspring Island, British Columbia**

Dear Secretary General,

1. I am writing on behalf of the National Campus and Community Radio Association/ l'Association nationale des radios étudiantes et communautaires (NCRA/ANREC). The NCRA/ANREC is a not-for-profit national association working to recognize, support, and encourage volunteer-based, non-profit, public-access campus and community-based broadcasters in Canada. We provide advice and advocacy for individual stations, and conduct lobbying and policy development initiatives for the sector with a view to advancing the role and increasing the effectiveness of our sector. Our goals are to ensure stability and support for individual stations, and to promote the long-term growth and effectiveness of the sector.
2. In this submission, the NCRA wishes to intervene against Rogers Broadcasting Limited's (Rogers') application to amend its broadcasting license in its current form. If there is a hearing, we further request the opportunity to speak at it.
3. Our main objection relates not to Rogers' proposal itself, but to the proposal in the context of the broadcast-spectrum congestion which already exists in the region. The two available protected frequencies in the Southern Vancouver Island and Gulf Island region of the West Coast (98.5 FM and 98.7 FM), are, due to their proximity, mutually exclusive; should this application by Rogers go ahead as proposed, it will prevent the

realization of all other broadcast projects in this area, regardless of their merit or relevance to the communities involved.

4. Although Rogers temporarily enjoys Industry Canada protection over the area to which it proposes to broadcast, we are not convinced that Rogers should be licensed to use the last remaining spectrum for financial gain without proper consideration of the broadcasting services provided in this area, and whether they fulfill the terms of the Broadcasting Act. Therefore, we appeal to the Commission to consider the best and highest use of these frequencies.
5. The CRTC's 2007 Diversity of Voices Hearing found that the three pillars of Canadian broadcasting, the public, private and community radio sectors were all key to the provision of diversity of voices in the national radio environment.

“...a healthy community element, strong public broadcasters and a plurality of voices within the private element provide the basis for a broadcasting system that offers Canadians a diversity of voices”<sup>(1)</sup>

The report also concluded that these three elements should all be available to Canadians.

“... (E)nsuring the availability of all three elements provides the foundation for viewpoint diversity within the Canadian broadcasting system.”<sup>(2)</sup>

6. Our research suggests that the Southern Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands region is already well-served by the private and public elements of these three pillars. Notwithstanding some reception issues, residents may choose from an array of commercial stations originating mainly from major urban centres. The expansion Rogers is proposing would occupy the last remaining frequency in this area in order to provide Sidney and the Saanich Peninsula with more commercial content that is not local or diverse.
7. In some parts of the region at issue, residents can also receive one of two campus-based community stations. However, these stations provide programming focused on serving the urban centres from which they originate. Further, these stations are located too far away from the Gulf Islands or rural Vancouver Island communities to provide meaningful local content or opportunities for community-access by rural residents.
8. The NCRA believes that what is missing for citizens in many of the small island communities in this area is the opportunity to experience and participate in radio that originates in a profoundly local, grassroots way from a community station, such as the one previously proposed by the Gabriola Radio Society (GRS).<sup>(3)</sup> We ask the Commission to consider how beneficial it could be for people in this relatively rural area to have access to a local radio station which reflects and shapes their local realities.
9. The Campus and Community Radio Sector offers programming and services of unparalleled diversity and innovation to Canadian listeners. The Commission has many

times previously recognized the benefits which community radio stations provide to their towns and cities. In June 2006, the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications' Final Report on the Canadian News Media concluded that:

“...the Broadcasting Act recognizes that citizen and community access is important.”<sup>(4)</sup>

10. And, according to the EKOS Report,

“The (Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications) also heard that community radio could make an important and unique contribution to the lives of people in smaller or more remote communities”<sup>(5)</sup>

11. The NCRA believes that every community in Canada, large and small, should have the opportunity to find itself reflected in a local community radio station, and we recommend that the CRTC reserve at least one protected radio frequency in each community for community use, as is done in many other countries.

12. In addition to its participatory and community-building aspects, local radio stations such as the one proposed previously by GRS, can provide an on-air venue for practical information and ideas in times of emergency. Community stations, with their often strong and diverse volunteer bases, are also well situated to develop local problem-solving and emergency preparedness strategies.

13. Rogers proposes a synchronous repeater for their Victoria B.C. based CIOC-FM service. The antenna would be placed on Saltspring Island to best increase the coverage and reception quality of their existing signal, especially in the Saanich Peninsula, including the town of Sidney, the ferry docks servicing Vancouver and the area around Victoria International Airport.<sup>(6)</sup> It is our understanding that if Rogers would resubmit a modified application, based on the use of a directional antenna excluding Gabriola Island from their coverage, their application would not jeopardize a future re-application by GRS to establish a community station at 98.7-FM with protected status. This solution would permit Rogers to correct their identified reception deficiencies without precluding the possibility of community radio development in the area. The NCRA feels that this use of the frequencies would be a reasonable compromise, and strongly encourages the Commission and Rogers to explore this option.

14. The NCRA has supported previous broadcast applications by the GRS, and we urge the Commission to provide this hardworking group with another opportunity to apply for a broadcasting license. We believe that the volunteers who have seen GRS through nine years of broadcast hearings, station meetings, CRTC applications, engineering briefs and thousands of other mundane yet important tasks have shown that they have what it takes to lift an incredible radio station to air. From a population of approximately 4,000 people, they have raised \$13,000 locally, and have plans for a local news department, local arts coverage, programming in both official languages as well as others, and emergency broadcast services. They have shown great commitment, interest and cooperation in

community radio on a national level; actively participating in the NCRA's yearly national conferences, as well as its listserves and committees. This small group, with their proportionally small resources, have volunteered to host approximately 200 delegates from across Canada at the 2010 National Campus and Community Radio Conference in June.

15. Neither GRS nor the NCRA believe it is a financially viable option to begin broadcasting on an unprotected frequency in an area experiencing spectrum congestion. If the GRS is unable to make it to the airwaves with a fully protected frequency, it will be a loss felt not only on the Island, but by Campus and Community Radio stations across Canada.
16. In closing, we thank the Commission for its time, and respectfully request that you deny this application by Rogers until such time as you have determined the highest and best use of this and any other remaining frequency, or approve it with the modifications we suggest in paragraph 13 above.

Sincerely,

*Catherine Fisher*  
NCRA/ANREC Regulatory Affairs Committee

Cc: Rogers Broadcasting Limited  
Gabriola Radio Society

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Notes:

1. Diversity of Voices: Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2008-4
2. Ibid
3. Gabriola Island, B.C. Application No. 2008-1533-4
4. EKOS Report p 67
5. Ibid
6. Appendix One, Supplementary Brief, Technical Amendment: CIOC Victoria