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

January 23, 2009

Re: Broadcasting Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 2008-12
Review of English- and French-language broadcasting services in English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada

1. I am writing on behalf of the National Campus and Community Radio Association/ l'Association nationale des radios étudiantes et communautaires (NCRA/ANREC) to provide supplementary information regarding Public Notice 2008-12, and a question asked of our panel by Chairman von Finkenstein. It pertained to section 22 of the BDU Regulations, cable carriage of campus and community broadcasters by Broadcast Distribution Undertakings, and the translation of analogue radio signals to digital cable signals.
2. 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. At present, the NCRA/ANREC represents 58 Canadian campus and community (c/c) radio stations.
3. Chairman von Finkenstein asked if we have researched the cost to BDUs of translating our stations' analogue radio signals into digital cable signals. This was in response to our recommendation that section 22 of the BDU Regulations be retained beyond 2011; this section currently requires BDUs to carry local community radio stations. We also

recommended that BDUs be required to translate community stations' signals from analogue to digital if/when they choose to offer only digital cable services.

4. We have conducted some basic preliminary research into the cost of this translation, and we are pleased to report our results here. This information has been provided to us by private engineering consultants, and we have not yet spoken with BDUs to confirm. We intend to contact BDUs in the near future, and we will be prepared to discuss our proposal with the Commission in more detail at the upcoming review of the Campus Radio Policy and the Community Radio Policy.
5. We have been advised that the marginal cost to BDUs of translation would be minimal, particularly if other analogue signals are already carried and translated by the BDU. Most BDUs that are in the process shifting from provision of analogue to digital cable service are likely already carrying and/or translating some analogue signals. Since BDUs are required to carry community radio stations under s. 22 at least until 2011, most already own the necessary translation equipment, or will have to acquire it prior to 2011 in order to comply with s. 22.
6. Where the equipment necessary to translate the signal is already in place, we have been advised that the cost of running this equipment (in terms of electricity, supervision, and spectrum) would be very low.
7. In terms of the technical procedure, we are told that BDUs would likely receive the analogue FM signal using a basic FM tuner and then encode it into digital format using one specialized piece of equipment. BDUs that do not own this equipment would be required to purchase it, but the cost is extremely low. For example, if a BDU's digital equipment uses the professional AES digital audio standard, they would need only an analog to digital audio converter like the Oakwood Broadcast Inc Stereo Analog to AES Converter, which has a retail price of \$363.00. Alternately, they could purchase a Barix Instreamer 100, which is a network-enabled analog and digital audio-to-Ethernet converter for commercial audio distribution with a retail price of \$395.00.
8. This equipment could be wired between the analog outputs of the tuner and the digital input of their equipment. We have been advised that installation is unlikely to take more than an hour or two. One engineer has suggested to us that the total cost to receive and develop an FM signal to make it available to customers would be a couple of thousand dollars at most. This cost would be similar regardless of whether a BDU is large or small. We intend to discuss this with BDUs in the upcoming months, and we will be prepared to provide additional details to the Commission during the upcoming policy review proceeding.
9. We believe it is also important to note that BDUs are permitted to charge consumers for providing local community radio content as part of their cable package. As such, BDUs stand to receive a benefit from their translation of community stations' content. We acknowledge that the benefit may be small, but we believe it is likely sufficient to cover the marginal cost of carrying out the translation. Given the profits earned by BDUs from their

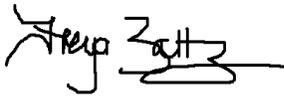
broadcasting activities, we believe it is reasonable to ask them to make this sacrifice to contribute to the health of the broadcasting system as a whole.

10. Further, we note that Section 3(1)(t)(i) of the *Broadcasting Act* states that “distribution undertakings should give priority to the carriage of Canadian programming services and, in particular, to the carriage of local Canadian stations.” During the 2008-12 hearing, numerous speakers suggested that campus and community radio is the best solution to the problem of insufficient English- and French-language broadcasting services in English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada. For this and other reasons, we suggest that the *Broadcasting Act* supports our request to retain s. 22 of the BDU Regulations, and to include a requirement for BDUs to carry out analogue to digital translation.
11. We would also like to remind the Commission of the existing obligation of BDUs to carry and support community broadcasting, dating back to the 1970s and the creation of the “community channel”. Under this obligation, BDUs were expected to direct a substantial percentage of their revenues to community broadcasting. Whether they have fulfilled this obligation in recent years is questionable. Therefore, we suggest that a marginal investment in equipment to rebroadcast community radio pales in comparison to the original obligation imposed on BDUs.
12. In proceeding CRTC PN 2005-74, the Canadian Cable Telecommunications Association (CCTA) referred to a survey showing that “only 4% of subscribers to Class 1 or Class 2 broadcasting distribution undertakings (BDUs) make use of the audio services distributed under this requirement.” We note that compared with the large number of cable subscribers, 4% would comprise a substantial portion of many c/c stations’ listening audiences.
13. This is particularly true for stations located in areas where low power signals and mountainous terrain prevent their signals from reaching all who reside within the relevant communities without the installation of repeaters. It is also true for stations that have difficulty increasing their power levels or install repeaters due to spectrum scarcity. And it is true for stations’ in all regions whose broadcast parameters may not allow them to reach listeners living outside major city centres, some of whom do not yet have high speed internet access.
14. Broadcasting on a BDU cable service also helps many community radio stations gain access to new listeners and untapped fundraising opportunities, and maintain a presence on the telecommunication network. In fact, some low power stations reach more people via cable than any other means of broadcasting, so they would be severely impacted in terms of listenership and fundraising if they lost their cable access due to the deletion of s. 22 or to the reluctance of BDUs to undertake the minimal costs of translating analogue signals to digital.
15. A significant number of c/c stations currently broadcast via both terrestrial FM and cable FM (our records indicate 53 stations in 2005). Some stations in the sector still broadcast only on cable (approximately 12 as of 2005). We will provide the Commission with

updated numbers on c/c cable broadcasting during the policy review proceeding. Regardless of the exact numbers, a substantial service stands to be lost if our requests to retain s. 22 and require analogue to digital translation are denied.

16. The NCRA/ANREC therefore hopes that the Commission continues to recognize the invaluable contribution of c/c radio to the Canadian broadcasting system. We believe that community access and local content are necessities for all Canadians. On this basis, we believe it is in the public interest to continue to require mandatory cable carriage of c/c stations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Freya Zaltz". The signature is stylized with a large initial 'F' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Freya Zaltz
Vice President, Regulatory and External Affairs, NCRA/ANREC