

**Presentation to the
Canadian Radio-television
Telecommunications Commission
in response to
Broadcasting Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 2004-6
by the
National Campus and Community Radio Association**

Tuesday, November 4th 2004

John Harris Stevenson and Tristis Ward

1. Mr. Chair, Members of the Commission. It is a pleasure to appear before you today representing Canada's community and campus radio stations.
2. My name is John Harris Stevenson. I am a former president of the NCRA, a former station manager at CFRU-FM Guelph, and former jazz programmer at CKDU-FM Halifax. I am a long-time policy advisor to the NCRA, and currently sit on the Association's advisory board.
3. With me today is Tristis Ward, station manager at CHSR-FM Fredericton, and a Vice President, Development, of the NCRA.
4. Melissa Kestner, the NCRA's national coordinator, is ill and unable to attend the hearings today.
5. Our reaction to the two satellite radio applicants can be summarized in one sentence:
- 6. Is this the best that Canada can do?**
7. As long-time supporters of diversity in radio we are excited by the potential benefits of satellite radio. Many of us work in community radio because we do not feel we have been well served by commercial media. [As a jazz fan living in a city with no jazz radio station, I would welcome a 24-hour jazz service.] We do not reject multi-channel subscription audio services out of hand. But the satellite radio applicants who have appeared before the Commission possess what we consider to be three major deficiencies:
8. First, the satellite applicants do not provide a satisfactory number of quality Canadian choices.
9. Second, the approval of these applicants will have a significant negative impact on financially fragile non-commercial broadcasters.
10. Third, the applicants make no commitment to support or broadcast the programming of Canada's community radio stations.

11. Let me elaborate on the first point. We do not object to Canadians having access to a variety of high quality American audio channels. The problem is that the applicants are not proposing a high enough number of Canadian choices. A mix of Canadian and non-Canadian services -- music and other programming -- is the central positive characteristic of Canadian broadcasting; not just on radio, but on television and cable and direct to home satellite.
12. **These applicants represent a significant departure from several decades of Canadian broadcasting policy.**
13. Our concern extends beyond these services' music channels. We remind the Commission that the applicants have proposed numerous channels of news, talk, and sports, without any significant Canadian choices in these areas. It seems absurd to us that a supposedly Canadian service would have **more Spanish language channels than French ones**; that the applicants will be presenting ESPN but not TSN, Fox News but not CBC Newsworld, Bloomberg but not ROB TV... and a weather channel that doesn't do Canadian weather.
14. XM and Sirius may be excellent services, **but they are American services aimed primarily at an American audience.** Canadians will be left out.
15. Both satellite applicants argue that a Canadian-owned and Canadian-oriented satellite audio service is not currently viable, and they are probably correct. But we cannot see the future, and neither can the applicants. Technological change may make a Canadian satellite service viable in future, **but if these American services are approved, such a Canadian service will never be able to get off the ground.**
16. [beat]
17. Our primary concern today is the impact these services will have on the viability of the community radio sector.

18. In their reply to our intervention, CRS states that they “fail to see how nationally broadcast programs on a subscription satellite service, which will attract under 10% of consumers, would impact ... community radio services.” **Well, those consumers are our listeners.**
19. Speciality music fans – fans of jazz, reggae, world music, and numerous other genres -- are among community radio’s most enthusiastic supporters. The applicants will be targeting these audiences, and the result will be diminished support for community radio. Our stations have some of the best specialty music programming in North America, but we do not possess the bandwidth to compete with national satellite services.
20. It is also troubling that both applicants will be rolling out channels that are similar to campus/community radio offerings: XMU on the XM service, and CBC 3 on Sirius. **Instead of partnering with us to produce and distribute programming, the applicants will be trying to recreate aspects of our service.**
21. I want to make it clear that campus and community broadcasters support programming diversity and wish to embrace technological innovation that can bring this about. But we must insist on services that reflect the objectives of the Broadcast Act, which states that the Canada’s broadcasting system will contain public, private, and **community** components. **Community media is missing from all of these applications – our programming is missing, along with an acknowledgement of our important role, and the impact these services will have on us.**
22. Satellite radio will inevitably come to Canada, perhaps as the result of these hearings, perhaps later. **But the changes that these services represent are already underway.** Satellite radio is one of many new media – including streaming Internet audio -- that blur what were formally clear distinctions between the local and the global, between broadcasting and retail music.

23. **New media collapse space and time, and what is in danger of being lost is the local.**
24. Satellite radio and Internet audio are wonderful at serving specialized, yet geographically distributed audiences, but they fail when it comes to supporting local communities. As we move to more national and international services, the local is in danger of being further marginalized.
25. We believe that community radio is the most effective means by which the local can be nurtured in Canadian broadcasting. We are inexpensive – **the average revenue of our member stations is less than \$120 000** – and unlike commercial and public broadcasters our focus is always clearly on the local community.
26. **We urge the Commission to link the creation and expansion of new national audio services with support for local, community broadcasters through a Canadian Community Radio Fund.**

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