

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions, Amendment of Parts 73 and 74 of the Commission's Rules to Establish Rules for Digital Low Power Television and Television Translator Stations, Channel Sharing by Full Power and Class A Stations Outside the Broadcast Television Spectrum Incentive Auction Context, Report and Order, GN Docket No. 12-268, MB Docket No. 03-185, MB Docket No. 15-137*

On the surface, our channel sharing *Report and Order*, designed to establish rules among broadcast television stations outside of the incentive auction context, might look and sound like just another technical proceeding before the Commission. While it is true, that the actions leading up to this *Report and Order*, and those needed to implement it, are technical in nature, the more meaningful story should actually be, what channel sharing means for those who love broadcast television, as well as the opportunities it presents for the nation's smallest broadcasters.

In the five years since Congress passed the Spectrum Act, I have heard from many LPTV and translator stations that are in fear of being displaced, following the incentive auction repacking process. Today's *Report and Order* had the potential to do more to put those station owners at ease, but I am less confident today of that happening, than when the item originally circulated. Establishing channel sharing between secondary stations or with full power or Class A stations, has the ability to provide these stations, with a new 'lease on life,' providing them the opportunity to continue serving their communities with diverse and local television programming.

As the Order correctly recognizes, channel sharing can help "resource-constrained Class A and secondary stations, including existing small, minority-owned, and niche stations, to reduce operating costs and provide them with additional net income to strengthen operations and improve programming services." Channel sharing may also enable secondary stations to expand their coverage area, which would mean bringing more variety programming, to more households.

What disappoints me is that today, we have actually closed the door on the very rare instances, in which a secondary station could gain must carry rights, as a result of channel sharing. In doing so, we have stricken from the Order, a simple acknowledgement that the "benefits of channel sharing for secondary stations, outweigh any theoretical increase in the number of secondary stations cable operators may be required to carry." Nonetheless I acknowledge that LPTV stations are free to privately negotiate for carriage, and am hopeful that many stations will find this to be a viable option.

According to the FCC's own data, LPTV stations are a relative bright-spot, when it comes to broadcast ownership diversity. Women owned 14.9 percent of LPTV stations, compared to just 6.3 percent of full power commercial TV stations in 2013. Similarly, the Commission's own data found that Hispanics owned three percent of full power stations, compared to 10 percent of LPTV stations. I am still optimistic, that the expanded channel sharing options authorized by this Order, will help provide the boost needed to keep more women and minorities in the broadcast business.

Thank you to the Media Bureau staff, including Michelle Carey, Hillary DeNigro, Martha Heller, Shaun Maher and Kim Matthews for their work on this item. Your efforts to enable channel sharing, ensure the public airwaves are used efficiently and for the greatest public good.