

**SEPARATE STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: In the Matter of Digital Audio Broadcasting Systems and Their Impact on the Terrestrial Radio Broadcast Service, MM Docket No. 99-325

I am very pleased to support this item, which selects in-band, on-channel (“IBOC”) as the technology to advance audio broadcasting into the digital future. Digital radio presents a tremendous opportunity for terrestrial radio broadcasters to compete with new technologies. It holds forth the promise of better quality sound – CD quality for FM, and FM quality for AM – which will enhance audio service generally and may well reanimate AM radio. But that’s just for starters. Going beyond sound quality there will be multiple broadcaster opportunities in the provision of new auxiliary services, such as multiple audio programming channels, audio-on-demand services, and interactive features, too. All these, and perhaps more, will, I believe, enhance audio broadcasting measurably and in the process advance the public interest.

I want to congratulate industry for putting aside traditional competitive rivalries and working together toward the common goal of bringing the benefits of digital audio technology to the American people. It’s a splendid example of private sector partnering, but it went even beyond that to include close cooperation and partnering with the public sector, too. The FCC also played a role here, and my hat is off to our Commission team members who put their shoulders to this task. To my mind, that’s what makes this system of ours work best, with everyone working toward a common goal and the common good. It’s a great model, and I would recommend it heartily for full application in other challenging areas, such as, for one example, the transition to digital television. I hope all the parties involved there will take note and follow suit. As I’ve said before, I am a believer, a true believer, in this kind of cooperative endeavor. In the competitive global economy we all inhabit, we work far more effectively when we work together.

A few questions remain to be settled, including how the IBOC system will function in the real world; what is the potential for and extent of interference that IBOC could cause to existing services; and the technical feasibility of nighttime AM IBOC transmissions. I believe the procedures put in place through this *Order* for resolving any interference issues that arise once interim transmissions begin are reasonable and effective and will enable the industry to address adequately and efficiently any and all such problems.

I look forward to the commencement of interim IBOC operations and to continuing to work with the industry to develop and finalize digital audio broadcasting standards. In Seattle, at the recent Radio Show, I saw first-hand some of the technology and equipment that will soon be available to bring digital radio to all of us. It’s truly exciting.

Finally, my thanks to the Bureau for the hard work and dedication that went into making this happen.