

February 20, 2015

Peter H. Doyle  
Chief, Audio Division  
Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Received & Inspected

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FCC Mail Room

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*In Reply Refer to:*  
*Facility ID No. 41157*  
*File No. BRED-20130724AAG*

Dear Mr. Doyle:

Mendocino County Public Broadcasting (MCPB) holds two FCC licenses, KZYX and KZYZ, and it is currently seeking renewal of the same. The FCC has held up the station's license renewal for almost a year due to the fact that five members of the public submitted objections to the renewal.

I am one of the five people who wrote to the FCC serving as a member of the Board of Directors of MCPB and elected by the majority of MCPB's 2,300 members for the term 2013-2016. I was appointed by the Board to serve as Board Treasurer for 2014. I also hosted a popular public affairs show, "All About Money", from 2008 until June of this year, when I was suspended for filing the FCC complaint.

As host and producer of the show, I was a finalist last year at the Norman Mailer Society for a fellowship, and I am currently under consideration in the final round for another major fellowship. The basis of my application includes archives of my program and the recommendations of several past guests on my show, who, incidentally, have included two former FCC commissioners.

I have not been permitted to appeal my suspension by MCPB management, against whom I filed my FCC complaint, by an objective, third-party who is external to MCPB. Therefore, I shall appeal my suspension once there is a change in management at MCPB and no such obvious conflict of interest exists.

At this time, I am writing to complain of an abuse of airwaves that occurred today, Friday, February 20, 2015, by MCPB host, Gordon Black, an on-air volunteer, Ana Lucas, and MCPB General Manager and Executive Director, John Coate.

Today, just after 11 a.m., during the "World of Music" program, Mr. Black and Ms. Lucas broke into programming to pitch for listeners to pledge to KZYX. The station is in the middle of its winter fund drive with a goal of \$70,000. It was announced that the station had raised about \$25,000 by Friday, February 20th, 11 a.m. This is four days into a six-day fundraising drive.

Ms. Lucas began to read comments by donors who had just pledged. Ms. Lucas stated: " A listener from Ukiah said she was put over the top by Sakowicz's recent newspaper comments and that she decided to pledge." Mr. Black chimed in that he had "tussled on the op-ed pages with Mr. Sakowicz recently, and that a letter was printed in response to Mr. Black's letter in the Ukiah Daily Journal from Mr. Sakowicz, but that Mr. Black hadn't read it, and couldn't find it."

Shortly after this exchange, General Manager and Executive Director, John Coate, entered the studio, sat down in front of a microphone, and began to talk. He stated that five (5) individuals had written to the FCC asking that the station's license not be renewed. Mr. Coate said the five individuals made "erroneous statements" in their complaints to the FCC. He further stated: "The station had proved several of these statements as being untrue." He continued and said, "unfortunately, \$13,500 had been spent on legal fees thus far to rebut these written comments to the FCC." Mr. Coate concluded by saying: "Our lawyers in Washington DC are doing a good job, but that the money could have been used, say, for equipment."

I am writing at this time to add to my original complaint. Today, Mr. Black and Mr. Coate, and Ms. Lucas, have abused their on-air positions at KZYX and KZYZ. Specifically, they have used the airwaves to do the following: to publicly discuss matters currently pending before the FCC; engage in a personal attack on me, a current Board Member and on-air programmer; engage in a personal attack on all five members of the public who were within their right to offer written objections to the renewal of the station's licenses per the FCC's own policy; and; use the yet-to-be resolved issues before the FCC as a way to blame those of us who made these objections to the FCC for both the failure of the station's current fundraising drive and the failure of the station's broadcasting equipment.

The renewal of the station's licenses is a matter of the greatest public importance, and station management should not be allowed to voice a one-sided opinion on unresolved matters currently under review by the FCC. This is a blatant abuse of power under the color of authority.

Finally, the FCC may be interested in the matter of the regular, frequent, and predictable failure of broadcasting equipment at MCPB.

Here in Mendocino County, the listeners of KYX and KZYZ get a signal that's often down. We're used to it. We get dead air. Or we get an irritating scratchy signal. Why dead air and a scratchy signals? It's because the station uses Korean War-era equipment. The equipment is old and held together by used replacement parts. Consequently, the signal has been down for as many as three days at a time in late-March, 2014.

Three days of dead air! That's shocking for a public radio station.

Then, there's this year, 2015. Let's look at the problems during just the first two

months of 2015. The following are all admissions. I quote from General Manager and Executive Director John Coate's own blog on the KZYX website.

On February 12, Coate wrote: " Use 91.5 if you can tune it in. There is an intermittent noise problem with the 90.7 transmitter that we are trying to get repaired."

On February 9, Coate writes on his blog: "The web stream is down during this power outage." He continues, "...generator up and down, fuses blown, UPS systems keeping us on at times, and more than one of them also gave out."

On January 29, Coate writes: "The signal is back on the air. Our Napa-based engineer configured a loaner unit for us." Coate continues, "Our backup STL transmitter unit, that we put in place because the regular ones were misbehaving, has failed completely. We will send our broken STL in for rebuild."

On January 27, Coate writes: "As we have had to report many times over the years, KZYX/KZYX has chronic problems with its set of STL radios. " He continues, " We have tried various adjustments which have helped, but we have not yet succeeded in eliminating an irritating scratchiness in the audio."

On January 12, Coate writes, "STL (Studio Transmitter Link) radios send the signal from Philo up to the main transmitter up on Cold Springs Peak. We tend to have fairly chronic issues with these radios."

To summarize, with respect to technical problems, the above five incidents are only the technical problems to which Mr. Coate admits -- and incidents only in the first two months of 2015. Mr. Coate makes other admissions about dead air in his reports to the MCPB Board of Directors, which are part of the minutes for Board meetings. He can erase his blog posts, but the Board minutes are a permanent record.

How does this involve the FCC?


It seems to me that it is the highest priority for any radio station is keeping the signal up. MCPB has failed miserably in this area, and those failures are well documented. On this basis alone, the FCC should withhold the renewal of the station's licenses until there is a change in management.

Finally, of course, there is today's matter of the abuse of the airwaves to make personal attacks on the five FCC complainants. Three separate persons, including the station's general manager and executive director, should not blame the complainants on-air, for the failure of equipment. It's a blatant case of abuse of the

authority that the FCC has vested in MCPB. Those personal attacks showed poor judgment, and they caused reputational harm to five members of the public.

For the above reasons, I reaffirm my objection to the renewal of MCPB's licenses at this time.

Yours very truly,



John Sakowicz

MCPB Board of Directors (2013-2016), Board Treasurer (2014); host and producer of "All About Money" (2008-present)  
PO Box 572  
Talmage, CA 95481-0572

**Filed Date:** 03/15/2015      **Action Id:** 40753      **Parent Id:** 39378  
**Type:** Supplement  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 03/15/2015  
**Submitted By:** John Sakowicz, Board Director and Treasurer  
**Company:** Mendocino County Public Broadcasting  
**Comment:** (none)

**Filed Date:** 04/21/2015      **Action Id:** 40894      **Parent Id:** 40526  
**Type:** Reply  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 04/21/2015  
**Submitted By:** John Sakowicz, Board Director and Treasurer  
**Company:** Mendocino County Public Broadcasting  
**Comment:** (none)

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Federal Communications Commission  
 445 12th Street SW  
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## Legal Action Information

**File Number:** BRED-20130724AAG

**Legal Comments**

**Comments:** (none)

**Legal Actions**

<b>Filed Date:</b>	11/04/2013	<b>Action Id:</b>	37778	<b>Parent Id:</b>	application
<b>Type:</b>	Informal Objection				
<b>Status:</b>	Filed				
<b>Status Date:</b>	11/04/2013				
<b>Submitted By:</b>	Sandra Patterson				
<b>Company:</b>					
<b>Comment:</b>	(none)				
<b>Filed Date:</b>	01/28/2014	<b>Action Id:</b>	38700	<b>Parent Id:</b>	application
<b>Type:</b>	Informal Objection				
<b>Status:</b>	Filed				
<b>Status Date:</b>	01/28/2014				
<b>Submitted By:</b>	M Kathryn Massey				
<b>Company:</b>					
<b>Comment:</b>	(none)				
<b>Filed Date:</b>	02/06/2014	<b>Action Id:</b>	38900	<b>Parent Id:</b>	application
<b>Type:</b>	Informal Objection				
<b>Status:</b>	Filed				
<b>Status Date:</b>	02/06/2014				
<b>Submitted By:</b>	John Sakowicz, Board Director and Treasurer				
<b>Company:</b>	Mendocino County Public Broadcasting				
<b>Comment:</b>	(none)				
<b>Filed Date:</b>	02/10/2014	<b>Action Id:</b>	38902	<b>Parent Id:</b>	application
<b>Type:</b>	Informal Objection				
<b>Status:</b>	Filed				
<b>Status Date:</b>	02/10/2014				
<b>Submitted By:</b>	Sheila Dawn Tracy				

**Company:**  
**Comment:** (none)  
**Filed Date:** 01/28/2014 **Action Id:** 38905 **Parent Id:** application  
**Type:** Informal Objection  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 01/28/2014  
**Submitted By:** Yazmin Solomon  
**Company:**  
**Comment:** (none)  
**Filed Date:** 05/21/2014 **Action Id:** 39281 **Parent Id:** application  
**Type:** Opposition  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 05/21/2014  
**Submitted By:** MENDOCINO COUNTY PUBLIC BROADCASTING  
**Company:**  
**Comment:** (none)  
**Filed Date:** 05/20/2014 **Action Id:** 39378 **Parent Id:** application  
**Type:** Informal Objection  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 05/20/2014  
**Submitted By:** John Sakowicz, Board Director and Treasurer  
**Company:** Mendocino County Public Broadcasting  
**Comment:** (none)  
**Filed Date:** 07/07/2014 **Action Id:** 39555 **Parent Id:** application  
**Type:** Application Comment  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 07/07/2014  
**Submitted By:** M Kathryn Massey  
**Company:**  
**Comment:** (none)  
**Filed Date:** 01/29/2015 **Action Id:** 40526 **Parent Id:** application  
**Type:** Reply  
**Status:** Filed  
**Status Date:** 01/29/2015  
**Submitted By:** MENDOCINO COUNTY PUBLIC BROADCASTING  
**Company:**  
**Comment:** (none)