

## Rothman Calls on FCC to Determine Whether WWOR-TV's Move to NYC Violates Federal Licensing Agreement

February 26, 2004

Rothman Calls on FCC to Determine Whether WWOR-TV's Move to NYC Violates Federal Licensing Agreement  
Writes Letter to Chairman Powell Expressing Concerns Over Station's Departure From Secaucus

Washington, DC - Concerned about the impact that WWOR-TV's decision to move the bulk of its operations from its Secaucus headquarters to New York City will have on the station's coverage of news in New Jersey, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today sent a letter to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Michael Powell, asking him to determine if the station's move was in violation of its federal licensing agreement. Rothman also expressed his concern to Powell that WWOR's move will limit New Jersey residents' access to diverse sources of local news coverage.

"Given the fact that the Federal Communications Commission approved WWOR's broadcasting license based on the guarantee that the station would relocate to New Jersey in 1982 and provide fair coverage of relevant news stories for the local community, WWOR's decision to move its headquarters to New York violates its stated commitment to New Jersey," Rothman wrote to Powell. "I am deeply concerned that WWOR's decision to relocate most of its operations to New York may violate its FCC licensing agreement. Please advise me as to the regulations that govern WWOR's license and whether or not they have violated this agreement by moving the station's TV operations out of Secaucus and into New York City."

The FCC revoked WWOR's license in the early 1980s after an investigation determined that the station's parent company, General Tire and Rubber Co., had engaged in corporate misconduct. The license was ultimately reinstated to WWOR, but it was contingent on the station's agreement to relocate to New Jersey and provide coverage of local, New Jersey news. Rothman argued in his letter, however, that WWOR's recent decision to relocate their headquarters means that WWOR will not be living up to its commitment to the community. Although officials at WWOR insist that it will remain in full compliance with its New Jersey license, the bulk of the station personnel will work in New York and only approximately 40 employees will remain in the Secaucus office.

In concluding his letter to Powell, Rothman wrote, "Furthermore, I urge you to review the FCC's 2001 decision to permit Rupert Murdoch to own two news television stations in the same media market and clarify how his consolidation of these two stations does not constitute an effort at media consolidation in the New York metropolitan news market."

In a separate letter, Rothman asked WWOR-TV General Manager Jim Clayton to explain why he believes the station is not in violation of its federal licensing agreement that had originally required WWOR to be located in New Jersey. Rothman's letter to Powell was also sent to the FCC's four commissioners: Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy, Commissioner Michael Capps, Commissioner Kevin Martin, and Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein. Both letters were faxed from Rothman's Washington, DC office today.

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February 26, 2004

The Honorable Michael K. Powell

Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to express my concern over the recent decision by WWOR-TV, New Jersey's only commercial VHF television station, to move the bulk of its operations from its Secaucus headquarters into WNYW-TV's studios in New York City. Since WWOR will no longer be based in New Jersey, I am troubled that the station's move may be in violation of its federal licensing agreement, which requires the station to serve the public interest in its licensed area. Given the fact that the Federal Communications Commission approved WWOR's broadcasting license based on the guarantee that the station would relocate to New Jersey in 1982 and provide fair coverage of relevant news stories for the local community, WWOR's decision to move its headquarters to New York breaks its stated commitment to New Jersey.

As you know, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) revoked WWOR's license in the early 1980s after an investigation determined the station's parent company, General Tire and Rubber Co., had engaged in corporate misconduct. The license was ultimately reinstated to WWOR, but it was contingent on the station's agreement to relocate to New Jersey and provide coverage of relevant news stories for the local community. However, WWOR's recent decision to relocate their headquarters does not comport well with this commitment to the community. Although officials at WWOR insist that it will remain in full compliance with its New Jersey license, the bulk of the station personnel will work in New York and only approximately 40 employees will remain in the Secaucus office. Furthermore, the station's website lists the station as "New York's WWOR" and the general manager of both WWOR and WNYW, Jim Clayton, will only commit to providing a minimal level of news coverage in New Jersey, such as covering breaking news when merited and maintaining three regular programs. These minimal efforts will not provide fair coverage of New Jersey news.

I am deeply concerned that WWOR's decision to relocate most of its operations to New York may violate its FCC licensing agreement. Please advise me as to the regulations that govern WWOR's license and whether or not they have violated this agreement by moving the station's TV operations out of Secaucus and into New York City. Furthermore, I urge you to review the FCC's 2001 decision to permit Rupert Murdoch to own two news television stations in the same media market and clarify how his consolidation of these two stations does not constitute an effort at media consolidation in the New York metropolitan news market.

I ask for your kind attention to this matter and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Rothman  
Member of Congress

CC: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
Commissioner Michael J. Capps  
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

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February 26, 2004

Mr. Jim Clayton  
General Manager  
WWOR-TV  
Nine Broadcast Plaza  
Secaucus, New Jersey 07096

Dear Mr. Clayton:

I was deeply concerned to learn that WWOR-TV, New Jersey's only commercial VHF television station, recently decided to move the bulk of its operations from its Secaucus headquarters to WNYW-TV's studios located in New York City. Since WWOR will no longer be primarily based in New Jersey, I am troubled that the station's move may be in violation

of its federal licensing agreement, which requires the station to serve the public interest in its licensed area. As this move will limit WWOR's access to and interaction with the New Jersey component of its New York metropolitan market, I am also concerned that the removal of your station's operations from the New Jersey news market will only serve to further limit New Jersey residents' access to diverse news broadcasting.

Given the fact that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved WWOR's broadcasting license based on the guarantee that the station would relocate to New Jersey in 1982 and provide fair coverage of relevant news stories for the local community henceforth, your decision to move WWOR's headquarters to New York breaks from the station's stated commitment to the community. Although you have insisted that WWOR will remain in full compliance with the its New Jersey license, the bulk of the station's personnel will work in New York, while only approximately 40 employees will remain in the Secaucus office. Furthermore, WWOR's website lists the station as "New York's WWOR" and you, as general manager, have only committed to providing a minimal level of news coverage in New Jersey, such as breaking news events and maintaining three regular programs. These minimal efforts will not provide fair coverage of New Jersey news.

I am deeply concerned that your decision to relocate most of WWOR's operations to New York may violate the licensing agreement issued by the FCC. Please advise me as to why you believe that WWOR is not in violation of its federal licensing agreement when taking into account your recent decision to move the station's TV operations out of Secaucus and into New York City.

I ask for your kind attention to this matter and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Rothman  
Member of Congress

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