

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO

Released: August 17, 1995

Re: Restructuring the FCC

The Chairman has announced this morning that projected budget cuts will require restructuring of the FCC. From my forty years combined experience as a broadcast executive and FCC Commissioner, I have seen many such reorganizations. From this perspective I believe that, given the way they are implemented, reorganizations tend to fall into one of two categories. If undertaken correctly, reorganization can be an opportunity to work cooperatively to improve our processes and give our staff better opportunities to be productive. If not handled correctly, they may produce unnecessary rancor and uncertainty.

I would like to take this opportunity to give the staff of the FCC my personal assurance that I will devote my best efforts to ensure that any restructuring that occurs and that requires my vote will be good for the Commission and fair to the employees involved. In this effort I look forward to working closely with the Chairman and other Commissioners to devise a final plan that will achieve these ends. While I will carefully study the plan outlined by the Chairman today, my initial reaction is that the staff reductions and shifts proposed cause me concern, and based on this fact I am not prepared at this time to support it.

The Chairman has certain prerogatives in administration. He must take responsibility for his own actions in areas that do not require full Commission approval.

Unfortunately, I am concerned with the rushed timing in his administrative approach. I believe any reductions should have been discussed with Commissioners in advance of a one day notice, particularly while Congress is in recess and some Commissioners are on vacation.

In my view, any reorganization of this Commission must take careful account of our core functions and assure that their integrity is not compromised. I am not sure the plan described today will achieve this, particularly in light of the sharp disagreement that has arisen over the staffing and functions of the field offices of our Compliance and Information Bureau. In my opinion, there are other areas for reductions that do not involve the vital local public service of the Compliance and Information Bureau in numerous large cities. I will pay particularly close attention to assuring that those parts of the Commission that allocate the spectrum, safeguard its integrity, and license its use are not adversely impacted.

The bottom line here is that the FCC is not different from any other large organization: it benefits from periodic intelligent reexamination of its functions and staffing. But this type of reexamination must not be done unilaterally. For when we talk of realigning staff functions we also talk about the reason the agency exists and what its most important missions are. I intend to take very careful account of this in working to develop a final restructuring plan.

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