

**PRESS STATEMENT
OF
COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

En Banc Hearing on AM Improvements

November 16, 1989

I am pleased we are conducting this hearing on ways to improve AM radio. I commend the Commission for its willingness to tackle difficult issues regarding a vital part of the communications marketplace.

As many of you know, I am a former AM broadcaster. I believe the AM service is an essential source of news, public affairs and entertainment for the American public. It is incumbent on this Commission to examine its regulatory structure to ensure that the best possible service is available. We began this process in 1986 with the AM Report. Today, we have several proceedings pending before the Commission. This hearing will provide us with additional information as well as crystallize some of the more important issues that have not been resolved.

The issues confronting the Commission are complex, involving questions of transmission, reception and manufacturing. Some of the suggestions contained in the record may be inconsistent with each other. If AM is to survive, this Commission must focus on what is best for the public and the industry as a whole.

I would remind the industry that, regardless of the technical and legal steps taken by this Commission, the survival of AM depends on individual licensees. Programming -- good quality programming and community service -- is the key ingredient to economic success. This was true when I was a broadcaster and is especially true in today's highly competitive marketplace.

The government has an obligation to create a technical and regulatory environment that will foster quality service. The industry has the responsibility to marshal its resources and invest in itself. To date, the industry has taken steps to adopt technical standards, develop new antenna systems and coordinate with receiver manufacturers. I urge you to continue these efforts.

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