

**STATEMENT OF
ACTING CHAIRMAN MICHAEL J. COPPS**

*Re: Impact of Arbitron Audience Ratings Measurements on Radio Broadcasters,
MB Docket No. 08-187.*

We launch this inquiry to examine the concerns that have been raised regarding Arbitron's Personal People Meter (PPM) ratings methodology. Minority broadcasters question PPM's accuracy and assert that it has had a devastating effect on their ability to compete in markets where it has been introduced. The legal actions initiated by the Attorneys General of New York, New Jersey and Maryland reflect similar concerns.

The Commission also has an independent interest in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of PPM. First, we have a strong interest in promoting ownership diversity—both under our general public interest authority and the express directive of Section 257 of the Communications Act. If our renewed commitment to promote minority broadcast ownership is to succeed, we must understand the ecosystem in which minority owners operate. We do not regulate Arbitron, but then we do not regulate banks either, and yet we should—indeed, we must—take into account the difficulties of access to capital if we are going to develop effective rules. Anything that affects media diversity and minority ownership—and the instant item does not draw any conclusions—affects our ability to do our job. Moreover, the Commission relies on Arbitron data to evaluate broadcast radio transactions, issue periodic industry trend reports, and conduct congressionally mandated reviews of our media ownership rules. Without confidence in the underlying data, those important functions could be undercut.

I want to emphasize that this proceeding is not about preserving the status quo or inhibiting technological progress. To the contrary, Arbitron should be commended for trying to improve its ratings methodology and for committing significant resources to that effort. I also appreciate the constructive attitude that all of the stakeholders, including Arbitron, have adopted and hope that will continue as we move forward.