

Washington, DC - The Local Community Radio Act passed the House of Representatives Wednesday evening with a resounding voice vote and now moves to the Senate. The bill will open the airwaves for hundreds of new non-commercial stations across the country, bringing low power radio to urban areas for the first time.

Following the recommendations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the House of Representatives voted to remove technical restrictions Congress placed on low power radio in 2000 at the request of commercial broadcasters. These restrictions have kept low power radio out of the top 50 radio markets, which reach over 160 million Americans.

Because of new requirements for LPFM stations in the 2009 bill, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) dropped its longstanding opposition to the Local Community Radio Act. These changes require LPFM stations to resolve interference to other stations, if it were to occur.

"The NAB and NPR have removed their objections and do not oppose this bill. The time has come to make the airwaves available to the people they serve. The time has come to give low power to the people," said lead cosponsor Rep. Mike Doyle (D-PA).

After the bill passes the Senate, the FCC can finally move forward with the low power radio service, licensing 100-watt stations to community groups nationwide. Due to the Congressional restrictions, the FCC was forced to dismiss most of the thousands of applications filed in 2000 by non-profits, churches, schools, and local governments.

During the House debate of the bill, lead cosponsor Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE) read a letter from Wes Hall, founder of an Omaha non-profit seeking a low power station. Hall wrote, "You cannot build a community without a cohesive voice and this will give a voice to the voiceless. Low power FM is the beacon that lights up the future for us."

Low power radio first hit the national spotlight during the Hurricane Katrina crisis when emergency workers were able to run low power stations using small generators or car batteries. Gary Galloway, an emergency responder in Mississippi, used low power radio to broadcast alerts when storms ravaged his community.

"My team has been deployed to tornado outbreaks, hurricanes, plane crashes, pipeline explosions, and other disasters that exceed the capability of local government," said Galloway, who visited lawmakers to tell his story. "My experiences have taught me that low power FM is a crucial tool for Emergency Management to communicate with citizens when lives and property are in jeopardy."

Wednesday's House vote marks the closest the Local Community Radio Act has been to becoming law since it was first introduced in 2005.

"The offices of Representatives Doyle, Terry, Waxman, and Boucher have demonstrated incredible leadership in fighting for community access to the nation's public airwaves," said Diane Foglizzo, Campaign Coordinator for the Prometheus Radio Project. "We're excited to have Senators Cantwell and McCain leading the way in the Senate to finally turn this bill into law."

The Prometheus Radio Project [[www. Prometheusradio.org](http://www.Prometheusradio.org)] is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization that advocates for greater citizen access to the airwaves through the licensing of low power radio stations. Read more: www.expandlpfm.org.

