

ANDREW GEORGE MP
HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Neil Stock
Head of Radio Planning & Licensing Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE 1 9HA

9th March 2004

Dear Mr Stock,

RE: THE FUTURE LICENSING OF FM COMMERCIAL RADIO

I recently received the enclosed letter from John Grierson of CKFM.

I have always made clear to him, in respect of the ambitions of CKFM, that I am not in a position to favour his bid above any others which may be brought forward in this respect.

However, I am grateful to him for drawing my attention to the issue of an extended licence.

Mr Grierson is absolutely correct. It is not simply an issue of narrow Cornish nationalism. It is about fundamental identity and service delivery. The obvious "loyalty" and strong associations between BBC Radio Cornwall and its listeners is ample demonstration of the point in question. Extending coverage for bureaucratic or technical convenience would only create the opportunity for an extremely bland product which would be almost completely pointless and certainly not worth the effort of licensing.

I do hope that you will take this into account when considering this matter.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Approved by Andrew George MP and signed in his absence

CKFM

9th February 2004

Dear Andrew,

I decided that it would be best for me to write a hard-copy letter to you and your MP colleagues following my e-mail to you the other day - and please accept my apologies for asking you about e-mail addresses: I realised this morning that I could have got them from the Parliament website. Here is the letter which I have written to all Cornwall MP's:

Some time back, you were kind enough to lend your support to my efforts to obtain a new FM radio licence for Cornwall, and that resulted in the now defunct Radio Authority making a licence available, in a "working list" published in May 2002.

Now, of course, the Radio Authority has been swallowed up into Ofcom, and that changeover has resulted in a delay to the process of awarding a licence for this new station by at least a year. To add to the frustrations which my colleagues and I feel, Ofcom then decided to publish a consultation paper on FM commercial radio licensing, and while much of the paper anticipates some much needed changes to the process, we have been horrified to see, in paragraph 39, the following words:

39. Cornwall is another of the areas on the Radio Authority's 'working list', and we are very aware that there are prospective applicants for such a licence who have been actively preparing their submissions. Ofcom has no pre-determined view about the appropriateness of larger or smaller licences in this region, but is interested to hear views as to whether a licence that combined coverage of Cornwall with coverage of the major population centres in Devon would represent a more effective use of this spectrum. As suggested above, a larger licence is likely to provide sufficient population coverage to enable a more specialist format to be delivered viably, while a Cornwall-only licence is likely to facilitate a more mainstream music service, but one which is better able to reflect a local identity. An alternative would be to combine coverage of Plymouth and Exeter and/or Torbay rather than offering separate licences for these cities, while maintaining Cornwall as a discrete licence area.

If you wish to see the full text of the consultation paper, it is available at www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/current... and then look for "Future licensing of FM commercial radio".

It is vitally important for us all that Ofcom be persuaded to adopt the option which I have underlined above. There are several reasons why the South West option is a very bad idea, but the main reason is simply this: Here we go again - Cornwall's special local identity and sense of community is in danger, yet again, of being lost in "The South West". And apart from the three and a half years of damned hard work which we at CKFM have put into first getting a new licence made available, and then putting our own case for being awarded that licence, the whole idea of moving goalposts right in the middle of the game is simply outrageous. All of us who have put work into a Cornwall station will have worked for nothing if this "southwest" option is adopted. The idea that a larger area would somehow "represent a better use of this spectrum" is simply not true from either the technical, social, or financial viewpoints.

If you agree with our point of view - and I stress that you do not have to be seen to be supporting CKFM in this, because the same thinking will apply to any of our competitor applicants - please could I prevail upon you to send a letter of objection before 11th March, which is the deadline for comment on the consultation document. The addresses is:

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I am writing to all Cornwall MP's in much the same vein as above, and on behalf of all my colleagues, I thank you for whatever support you can give us. If there is anything I can do to give you further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

John Grierson
Managing Director