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Mr Peter Davies  
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Dear Mr Davies

Consultation on the future of radio

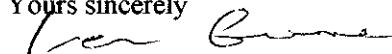
I have long been a supporter of both commercial radio and dab radio but have now virtually given up both in favour of that available on the internet. There are two reasons for this.

First, both the Radio Authority and then Ofcom have failed to provide choice and diversity. On FM and AM we in the UK have far fewer stations and less variety of format than in many developing as well as developed countries. The Authority licenced station after station promising a diet of classic hits whilst Ofcom failed to carry out detailed frequency audits and to reorganise the FM band, measures which have resulted in space being found for more stations abroad.

In support of this we need only look at the award for the Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire dab licence. The lineup is for three contemporary chart hits stations, one for classic hits, one modern rock, one classic rock and pop, one chill and one religious: in other words, no classical, no news, no easy-listening, no jazz, no talk, indeed nothing else and yet Ofcom's opinion is that "together these services are likely to have appeal to a broad range of listeners in terms of age and musical tastes". No, they are not.

Second, I do not like dab's poor technical quality and in this connection do not understand how the regulator can put forward proposal 5. When commercial radio was first introduced here the then regulator, the IBA, recognized the importance of high technical standards by requiring its FM stations to broadcast in stereo from the start: now, some 30 years later, whilst other countries are making plans to move forward and introduce high quality services on dab+, the current regulator suggests that there could be a case for reverting to mono. At this rate, dab radio in this country will become a laughing stock. I believe that both Ofcom and also its licensee Digital 1, which now transmits just three stereo stations, two of which can be heard in better quality on FM anyway, should go back and read what listeners were led to expect for dab radio and then concentrate on raising standards instead of lowering them.

Yours sincerely



Len Gurrie