

Allbritton-Sinclair Petition to Deny. Written 14 August 2013.

Allbritton. Barrington. Cox. Fisher. Four Points. Freedom. Newport. Titan.

Sinclair Broadcast Group has turned itself overnight from a company most known for its attempts at centralized news operations, its pathetic ABC affiliates that lacked local news and its use of Cunningham Broadcasting (and now Deerfield Media and Howard Stirk Holdings) to operate additional stations in many markets into a company that has bought, bought and then bought some more. In part or in whole, it has acquired all of the above station groups. On a pro forma basis, including the acquisition by Sinclair of Allbritton and Barrington and the acquisition by Cunningham of a station from Horseshoe Curve Broadcasting, and also assuming that Sinclair is likely to continue operating the stations it is selling off through shared services-joint sales agreements as these companies are known to do, SBGI will operate 150 stations serving 38.2% of Americans.

The questions about consolidation of media ownership with regard to this deal are important. Sinclair will own or operate multiple stations in extralegal manners in a variety of markets. Some of these arrangements are carried over from previous owners.

- Birmingham, Alabama. The massive Birmingham-Tuscaloosa-Anniston market is one filled with satellite stations. SBG will have three separate signals with Allbritton: ABC (WCFT, WJSU and WBMA LP), CW (WTTO and WDBB) and MyTV (WABM). That's five full-power stations providing three services.
- Mobile, Alabama/Pensacola, Florida: Sinclair owns WEAR (ABC) and WFGX. Deerfield owns WPML (NBC) and WJTC. Between the two companies, Sinclair operates four stations.
- Peoria, Illinois. Sinclair owns (Fox) WYZZ, which is currently operated by Nexstar. With Barrington, it would acquire (ABC) WHOI, which is managed by (NBC) WEEK (Granite). A complicated set of circumstances may ensue if the Barrington application is approved and, as has been speculated, Nexstar (which owns CBS station WMBD) were to buy Granite.
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Sinclair owns KGAN (CBS) and manages KFXA (Fox, Second Generation of Iowa).
- Wichita, Kansas. Sinclair owns KSAS (Fox) and satellites and manages KMTW (Mercury Broadcasting).
- Kirksville, Missouri/Ottumwa, Iowa. Barrington owns KTVO (ABC) and controls KYOU (Fox, American Spirit), a relationship Sinclair would absorb upon acquiring Barrington. These two stations are the only commercial service in the market.

- Baltimore, Maryland. Sinclair owns WBFF (Fox); Cunningham owns WNUV; Deerfield owns WUTB. In addition, Sinclair's acquisition of Allbritton includes WJLA in Washington, DC; between the two interconnected markets, SBGI will own four stations.
- Flint, Michigan. Sinclair acquiring Barrington would give Sinclair and likely shells three stations: WEYI (NBC), WSMH (Fox) and WBSF (CW).
- Traverse City, Michigan. Sinclair acquiring Barrington would mean it would inherit an LMA relationship between WPBN-WTOM (NBC) and WGTU-WGTQ (ABC).
- Reno, Nevada. Sinclair owns KRXI (Fox) and operates KAME.
- Rochester, New York. Sinclair owns WUHF (Fox, which is operated by Nexstar under LMA); Deerfield owns WHAM (ABC).
- Syracuse, New York. Sinclair is selling WSYT (Fox) to Bristlecone Broadcasting (while retaining management) and would take ownership of WSTM (NBC) and operational control of WTVH (CBS, Granite) if the Barrington acquisition is approved.
- Asheville, North Carolina/Greenville-Spartanburg, South Carolina. Sinclair owns WLOS (ABC) and Cunningham owns WMYA.
- Columbus, Ohio. Sinclair owns WSYX (ABC), while Fox station WTTE is owned by Cunningham. A separate SSA-JSA with WWHO (CW, Manhan Media) makes it three.
- Cincinnati, Ohio. Sinclair owns WKRC (CBS). Deerfield ownsWSTR.
- Dayton, Ohio. ABC outlet WKEF and Fox station WRGT are owned by Sinclair and Cunningham, respectively.
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Cunningham owns KOKH (Fox); Sinclair owns KOCB (CW).
- Eugene, Oregon. Sinclair (through its acquisition of Fisher) owns KVAL (CBS); KMTR (NBC)'s operations are outsourced to SBGI.
- Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Sinclair owns CBS outlet WHP (and is likely to continue operating it), operates CW station WLYH (owned by Nexstar) and will also own ABC station WHTM. These are two of the market's top-four rated stations and three of the top five.
- Johnstown-Altoona, Pennsylvania. Sinclair owns WJAC, the market's NBC affiliate. Cunningham is about to buy Fox station WWCP in an unrelated transaction; WWCP in turn operates the ABC outlet, WATM. In effect, SBGI will control three stations, only one of which will actually be owned by Sinclair.
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Fox station WPGH is owned by Sinclair, while WPMY (Cunningham) has been managed by Sinclair since 1991 through an LMA.
- Charleston, South Carolina. Sinclair would acquire WCIV (ABC) in the Allbritton deal. WMMP will be owned by Stirk. WTAT (Fox) is owned by Cunningham.
- Florence-Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Barrington owns WPDE (ABC) and manages WWMB (CW, SagamoreHill).

- Nashville, Tennessee. Sinclair owns WZTV (Fox) and WUXP, while it also controls WNAB (CW, Tennessee Broadcasting).
- Beaumont-Port Arthur, Texas. Sinclair owns KFDM (CBS); Deerfield owns KBTU (Fox).
- El Paso, Texas. Sinclair owns KFOX (Fox); Cunningham will own KDBC (CBS). KDBC must be divorced from its own shell relationship with KTSM (NBC, Nexstar).
- San Antonio, Texas. Sinclair owns KABB (Fox) and WOAI (NBC), while Deerfield owns KMYS (CW).
- Charleston-Huntington, West Virginia: Sinclair owns WCHS (ABC); Cunningham owns WVAH (Fox).

That's 28 out of 210 DMAs in which Sinclair Broadcast Group, through Cunningham, Deerfield and others, owns, operates or will own or operate on a pro forma basis multiple stations in an extralegal manner.

Is this even allowable? SBG has been allowed to grow into a behemoth of a company through the Commission's inaction in other sales. It may be too late to keep it from growing too big, but denying the acquisition of Allbritton (and also that of Barrington) would prevent eight of the 28 shell scenarios described above from happening.

For local diversity, for those who know what consolidation of media ownership has done or will do to the media landscape and to people's livelihoods in those 28 markets, and for viewers in central Pennsylvania and other markets who have lost or will lose competition in local news, it is in the best interest of the television viewer and of the Federal Communications Commission to deny SBG the ability to buy Allbritton.

Sincerely,
Raymie Humbert