

The Office of Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554
Attn. Audio Division
File No. 20140130ACZ
Re: WSKG-FM, Binghamton, NY, Facility ID number 74039

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Received & Inspected

MAY 30 2014

FCC Mail Room



George
NY

Informal Objection

Dear FCC Audio Division:

I wish to criticize WSKG's failure to adequately cover the burning local issue of shale gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing in six of the last eight years. The controversy has been taking place all around us in Northern Pennsylvania and the Southern Tier of New York, and by extension in the rest of New York State. Almost all of this region has been embroiled in this same controversy.

WSKG has not responded to a demonstrated community concern for these gas related accidents and contaminations with adequate news coverage.

WSKG should have conveyed more of this information with more interviews, more community conversations and more recordings of hearings, talks and debates with the major players and victims in this region. How much does it cost to do a phone interview with local people who are in other media's focus?

WSKG did not cover most of the many New York State hearings on the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS), or the EPA hearings on the safety of shale gas fracturing or the Seneca Lake Gas Storage Facility, or the Constitution Pipeline or the proposed permissive new regulations on Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) or the proposed NYS Energy Plan that calls for a further build out of the natural gas infrastructure. These have been issues of major importance to the local populace. People have demonstrated their concern with tens, even hundreds of thousands of comments submitted to the NYS DEC and the EPA on these issues and yet WSKG has given most of these issues only a cursory mention.

To their credit WSKG did air a recording of the SGEIS hearings in Binghamton, but failed to cover all other hearings with any depth.

They have also failed to cover opponents of the process such as environmental scientist Sandra Steingraber, journalists such as Josh Fox, celebrity activists such as Mark Ruffalo, Sean Lennon and Yoko Ono, economists such as Jannette Barth, or former oil and gas executives such as Lou

Allstadt, retired Mobil Oil vice-president and James Northrup, former ARCO executive and investor. All have not been interviewed by WSKG.

If UK Television could recently produce a video interview with videographer Vera Scroggins in Pennsylvania from the other side of the Atlantic and with activists in Australia on the other side of the globe, surely WSKG could have done a simple phone interview with Vera and Ray Kemble and Craig Stevens and Frank Finan and Rebecca Roter, all outspoken opponents and in some cases victims of fracked gas expansion in northern Pennsylvania. After all, they are only 30 to 60 miles south of Binghamton. How could that have been so cost prohibitive?

Any of these PA people could have driven up to the WSKG studios for an interview if they had been invited. They could have documented in great detail the kinds of contamination that have been occurring in PA since Norma Fiorentino's water well exploded on Jan. 1, 2009.

When one thinks of all the news stories that have been generated in the print and TV media concerning shale gas extraction in this region since 2008 when people first started tuning into the threats, the news of contaminations and air pollution and the people who have been harmed in Dimock, and on Paradise Road in Bradford County and in Butler County, PA one has to say that WSKG did not include those gas fracking victims as part of their community.

When one thinks of all the demonstrations and lobby days in Albany, all the town moratoriums and bans that have been passed, all the presentations by experts as well as by victims, as well as all the hearings referred to earlier, we learned of most of these events from other media, not from WSKG.

Even though WSKG has chosen to have no local news staff until recently they could have put together more "Community Conversations" on these issues along the way. Crystal Sarakas was able to put together some shows on the issue.

Since it was a national NPR story, they evidently carried a Morning Edition Matt Richmond interview with Helen and David Slottje who devised the legal rationale based on local zoning powers for denying gas companies drilling access to local towns through moratoriums and bans.

There was also a debate between Chip Northrup and Dennis Holbrook, former legal counsel for Norse but that was produced by the Susan Arbetter show and I don't believe WSKG carried it. WSKG does not include it in their Quarterly Issues List.

There was a cursory interview with Professors Robert Howarth and Anthony Ingraffea of Cornell University who along with Renee Santoro wrote the groundbreaking study suggesting that shale

gas fracturing would lead to more global warming than coal. But it was packaged as a debate between them and Professor Larry Cathles, also of Cornell, and was produced by Innovation Trail. Evidently WSKG did not air that one either since it is not included in their Quarterly Issues List.

WSKG also failed to cover the many talks that Professor Ingraffea made or even the debates between Ingraffea and Terry Engelder, a professor of geosciences at Penn State University. What better way to maintain a nonpartisan stance on an issue and yet still cover it than to broadcast a debate? But WSKG did not air this or any other debates on the subject.

During much of this time Jeremy Alderson was publishing a newspaper, the No Frack Almanac, documenting shale gas damage. More recently he chose to be arrested at a Seneca Lake protest against that proposed gas storage facility. WSKG could have interviewed him but did not. He is now broadcasting his commentaries on a commercial station, not on WSKG.

Bill Huston and Cris McConkey and others in Shaleshock Media have produced large numbers of videos documenting the many talks, hearings and debates on fracking and the many town board meetings and hearings on moratoriums and bans, all with far fewer financial resources than WSKG has had.

Most of these videos simply document meetings, hearings and lectures without expressing opinions on the matter. WSKG could have been extracting from these recordings and articles during the past many years but they chose to not do that.

Vera Scroggins has documented with many videos the damage and disruption that these large fracking operations have caused in Susquehanna County, PA. WSKG could have excerpted from her videos or interviewed her to better serve the local community both in NY and PA but they did not.

Why hasn't the station been willing to open up to the use of material by community producers? Their new news director, Charles Compton, says he doesn't approve of advocacy journalism and yet he approves of ProPublica which could be characterized as producing mission driven coverage of issues not covered by the mainstream commercial press. That in fact is what local media providers have been doing for the public of this region in the absence of commercial and semi-commercial (NPR) coverage. But even commercial media, both print and visual, has supplied far more coverage, than this local NPR affiliate, WSKG.

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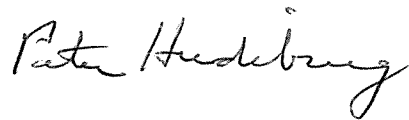
WSKG may be obligated to play NPR material including America's Natural Gas Alliance promotional ads when they are airing the four NPR programs that they have contracted to carry, but that does not obligate them to almost completely ignore the fracking issue in all the rest of their programming.

WSKG could have supplied public announcements of past hearings of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the DEC hearings on proposed regulations for new LNG regulations and the new proposed NYS Energy Plan, but they did not.

An unfortunate loophole in the FCC regulation requiring a "Donor's List" is that the station is not obligated to identify any wealthy entities, possibly Chesapeake Energy or Cabot Oil and Gas, who might have chosen to contribute large amounts of money, not for advertising purposes, but to simply influence programming.

WSKG's coverage does not constitute adequate service for the local community of these all important community, national and international issues.

Sincerely yours,



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