

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE****Antitrust Division****United States v. Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., et al.; Proposed Final Judgment and Competitive Impact Statement**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C. 16(b)–(h), that a proposed Final Judgment, Stipulation, and a Competitive Impact Statement as to Nexstar Media Group, Inc. (“Nexstar”) have been filed with the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in *United States of America v. Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., et al.*, Civil Action No. 1:18–cv–2609. On December 13, 2018, the United States filed an Amended Complaint alleging that Nexstar, Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., Raycom Media, Inc., Tribune Media Company, Meredith Corporation, Griffin Communications, LLC, and Dreamcatcher Broadcasting, LLC violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. 1, by agreeing to unlawfully exchange station-specific, competitively sensitive information regarding spot advertising revenues. The proposed Final Judgment as to Nexstar, filed at the same time as the Complaint, prohibits sharing of competitively sensitive information, require Nexstar to implement antitrust compliance training programs, and impose cooperation and reporting requirements on Nexstar.

Copies of the Amended Complaint, proposed Final Judgment, Stipulation and Competitive Impact Statement as to Nexstar are available for inspection on the Antitrust Division’s website at <http://www.justice.gov/atr> and at the Office of the Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Copies of these materials may be obtained from the Antitrust Division upon request and payment of the copying fee set by Department of Justice regulations.

Public comment is invited within 60 days of the date of this notice. Such comments, including the name of the submitter, and responses thereto, will be posted on the Antitrust Division’s website, filed with the Court, and, under certain circumstances, published in the **Federal Register**. Comments should be directed to Owen Kendler, Chief, Media, Entertainment, and Professional Services Section, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 450 Fifth Street

NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20530 (telephone: 202–616–5935).

**Patricia A. Brink,**  
*Director of Civil Enforcement.*

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
*United States of America, 450 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC 20530; Plaintiff, v. Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., 10706 Beaver Dam Road, Hunt Valley, Maryland 21030; Raycom Media, Inc., 201 Monroe Street, Montgomery, AL 36104; Tribune Media Company, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611; Meredith Corporation, 1716 Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50309; Griffin Communications, LLC, 7401 N Kelley Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK 73111; Dreamcatcher Broadcasting, LLC, 2016 Broadway, Santa Monica, CA 90404; and Nexstar Media Group, Inc., 545 E John Carpenter Freeway, Suite 700, Irving, TX 75062, Defendants.*

Case No. 1:18–cv–2609–TSC

**AMENDED COMPLAINT**

The United States of America, acting under the direction of the Acting Attorney General of the United States, brings this civil antitrust action to obtain equitable relief against Defendants Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. (“Sinclair”), Raycom Media, Inc. (“Raycom”), Tribune Media Company (“Tribune”), Meredith Corporation (“Meredith”), Griffin Communications, LLC (“Griffin”), Dreamcatcher Broadcasting, LLC (“Dreamcatcher”), and Nexstar Media Group, Inc. (“Nexstar”) alleging as follows:

**I. NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. This action challenges under Section 1 of the Sherman Act Defendants’ agreements to unlawfully exchange competitively sensitive information among broadcast television stations.

2. Sinclair, Raycom, Tribune, Meredith, Griffin, Dreamcatcher, and Nexstar (“Defendants”) and certain other television broadcast station groups (“Other Broadcasters”) compete in various configurations in a number of designated marketing areas (“DMAs”) in the market for broadcast television spot advertising. Certain national sales representation firms (“Sales Rep Firms”) represent broadcast station groups, including the Defendants, in their sales of spot advertising to advertisers. Defendants’, Other Broadcasters’, and Sales Rep Firms’ concerted behavior in exchanging competitively sensitive information has enabled the Defendants and Other Broadcasters to reduce competition in the sale of broadcast television spot advertising where they purport to compete head to head.

3. Defendants’ agreements are restraints of trade that are unlawful under Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1. The Court should therefore enjoin Defendants from exchanging competitively sensitive information with and among competing broadcast television stations.

**II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

4. Each Defendant sells spot advertising to advertisers throughout the United States, or

owns and operates broadcast television stations in multiple states or in DMAs that cross state lines. Sales Rep Firms represent broadcast stations throughout the United States, including each of the Defendants, in the sale of spot advertising to advertisers throughout the United States. Such activities, including the exchanges of competitively sensitive information featured in this Complaint, are in the flow of and substantially affect interstate commerce. The Court has subject matter jurisdiction under Section 4 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 4, and under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1337, to prevent and restrain the Defendants from violating Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1.

5. Defendants have consented to venue and personal jurisdiction in this District. Venue is proper in this judicial district under Section 12 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 22, and 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

**III. DEFENDANTS**

6. Defendant Sinclair is a Maryland corporation with its principal place of business in Hunt Valley, Maryland. Sinclair owns or operates 130 television stations in 87 DMAs and had over \$2.7 billion in revenues in 2017.

7. Defendant Raycom is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Montgomery, Alabama. Raycom owns or operates 55 television stations in 43 DMAs and had over \$670 million in revenues in 2017.

8. Defendant Tribune is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Chicago, Illinois. Tribune owns or operates 41 television stations in 31 DMAs and had over \$1.8 billion in revenues in 2017.

9. Defendant Meredith is an Iowa corporation with its principal place of business in Des Moines, Iowa. Meredith owns or operates 17 television stations in 12 DMAs and had over \$1.7 billion in revenues in 2017.

10. Defendant Griffin is an Oklahoma corporation with its principal place of business in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Griffin owns or operates four television stations in two DMAs and had over \$60 million in revenues in 2017.

11. Defendant Dreamcatcher is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Santa Monica, California. Dreamcatcher owns or operates three television stations in two DMAs and had over \$50 million in revenues in 2017.

12. Defendant Nexstar is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Irving, Texas. Nexstar owns or operates 105 television stations in 93 DMAs and had over \$1.2 billion in revenues in 2017.

**IV. INDUSTRY BACKGROUND**

13. Broadcast television is important to both viewers and advertisers. For viewers, broadcast stations, including local affiliates of ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC (collectively, the “Big 4” stations), offer not only highly rated entertainment and sports programming, but also local reporting of the news and events in their own communities and

regions. The wide popularity of broadcast station programming—and the concomitant opportunity to reach a large local audience—also make broadcast television critical to advertisers, including local businesses that seek to reach potential customers in their own communities.

14. Broadcast stations sell advertising “spots” during breaks in their programming. An advertiser purchases spots from a broadcast station to communicate its message to viewers within the DMA in which the broadcast television station is located.

15. Broadcast stations typically divide their sale of spot advertising into two categories: local sales and national sales. Local sales are sales a broadcast station makes through its own local sales staff, typically to advertisers located within the DMA. National sales are sales a broadcast station makes through either a Sales Rep Firm or through a centrally located broadcast group staff, typically to regional or national advertisers.

16. Sales Rep Firms represent broadcast stations in negotiations with advertisers’ or advertisers’ agents regarding the sale of broadcast stations’ spot advertising. There are two primary Sales Rep Firms in the United States. Often a Sales Rep Firm represents two or more competing stations in the same DMA. In those cases, the Sales Rep Firms purportedly erect firewalls to prevent coordination and information sharing between sales teams representing competing stations.

#### V. THE UNLAWFUL AGREEMENTS

17. Defendants and Other Broadcasters have agreed in many DMAs across the United States to reciprocally exchange revenue pacing information. Certain Defendants also engaged in the exchange of other forms of competitively sensitive sales information in certain DMAs. Pacing compares a broadcast station’s revenues booked for a certain time period to the revenues booked for the same point in time in the previous year. Pacing indicates how each station is performing versus the rest of the market and provides insight into each station’s remaining spot advertising inventory for the period.

18. Defendants’ exchange of competitively sensitive information has taken at least two forms.

19. First, Defendants and Other Broadcasters regularly exchanged pacing information through the Sales Rep Firms. At least once per quarter, but frequently more often, the Sales Rep Firms representing the Big 4 stations in a DMA exchanged real-time pacing information regarding each station’s revenues, and reported the information to the Defendants and the other Big 4 station owners in the DMA. Typically, the exchanges included data on individual stations’ booked sales for current and future months as well as a comparison to past periods. To the extent a Sales Rep Firm represents more than one Big 4 station in a DMA through sales teams separated by a supposed firewall, the exchange of pacing and other competitively sensitive information occurred between the sales teams and through those firewalls. Once given to the Defendants and Other Broadcasters in the DMA, the competitors’ pacing information was then disseminated to

the stations’ sales managers and other individuals with authority over pricing and sales for the broadcast stations. These exchanges occurred with Defendants’ knowledge and frequently at Defendants’ instruction, and occurred in DMAs across the United States.

20. Second, in some DMAs, Defendants and Other Broadcasters exchanged competitively sensitive information, including real-time pacing information for booked sales for current and future months, directly between broadcast station employees. These exchanges predominantly concerned local sales, but sometimes pertained to all sales or national sales.

21. These exchanges of pacing information allowed stations to better understand, in real time, the availability of inventory on competitors’ stations, which is often a key factor affecting negotiations with buyers over spot advertising prices. The exchanges also helped stations to anticipate whether competitors were likely to raise, maintain, or lower spot advertising prices. Understanding competitors’ pacing can help stations gauge competitors’ and advertisers’ negotiation strategies, inform their own pricing strategies, and help them resist more effectively advertisers’ attempts to obtain lower prices by playing stations off of one another. Defendants’ information exchanges therefore distorted the normal price-setting mechanism in the spot advertising market and harmed the competitive process.

22. Defendants’ and Other Broadcasters’ regular information exchanges, directly and through the Sales Rep Firms, reflect concerted action between horizontal competitors in the broadcast television spot advertising market.

#### VI. VIOLATION ALLEGED

##### (Violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act)

23. The United States repeats and realleges paragraphs 1 through 22 as if fully set forth herein.

24. Defendants violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1, by agreeing to exchange competitively sensitive information, either directly or through Sales Rep Firms. Defendants’ exchange of pacing information resulted in anticompetitive effects in the broadcast television spot advertising markets in many DMAs throughout the United States.

25. The scheme consists of exchanges between Defendants and Other Broadcasters, either directly or through the Sales Rep Firms, in many DMAs, of their stations’ revenue pacing information or, for certain Defendants in certain DMAs, other competitively sensitive information concerning spot advertising sales.

26. These unlawful information sharing agreements between Defendants, Other Broadcasters, and Sales Rep Firms have had, and likely will continue to have, anticompetitive effects in spot advertising markets by disrupting the normal mechanisms for negotiating and setting prices and harming the competitive process.

27. Defendants’ agreements to exchange competitively sensitive information are unreasonable restraints of interstate trade and commerce. This offense is likely to continue

and recur unless the requested relief is granted.

#### VII. REQUESTED RELIEF

28. The United States requests that the Court:

a. adjudge that the information sharing agreements unreasonably restrain trade and are unlawful under Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1;

b. permanently enjoin and restrain Defendants from sharing pacing or other competitively sensitive information or agreeing to share such information with any other broadcast station or broadcast station group, directly or indirectly, and requiring Defendants to take such internal measures as are necessary to ensure compliance with that injunction;

c. award the United States the costs of this action; and

d. award such other relief to the United States as the Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: December 13, 2018

Respectfully submitted,

FOR PLAINTIFF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

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*Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust.*

William J. Rinner,

*Acting Chief of Staff and Senior Counsel.*

Patricia A. Brink,

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*United States Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, Media, Entertainment & Professional Services Section, 450 Fifth Street NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20530, Telephone: (202) 514-0230, Facsimile: (202) 514-7308.*

#### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

*United States of America; Plaintiff, v. Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., et al., Defendants.*

Case No. 1:18-cv-2609

Judge: Tanya S. Chutkan

#### [PROPOSED] FINAL JUDGMENT

WHEREAS, Plaintiff, United States of America, filed its Amended Complaint on December \_\_, 2018, alleging that Defendant Nexstar Media Group, Inc., among others, violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1, the United States and Defendant, by their respective attorneys, have consented to the entry of this Final Judgment without trial or adjudication of any issue of fact or law;

AND WHEREAS, this Final Judgment does not constitute any evidence against or

admission by any party regarding any issue of fact or law;

AND WHEREAS, the United States and Defendant agree to be bound by the provisions of this Final Judgment pending its approval by this Court;

AND WHEREAS, the Defendant agrees to undertake certain actions and to refrain from engaging in certain forms of information sharing with its competitors;

NOW THEREFORE, before any testimony is taken, without trial or adjudication of any issue of fact or law, and upon consent of the parties, it is ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED:

## I. JURISDICTION

This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter and each of the parties to this action. The allegations in the Complaint arise under Section 1 of the Sherman Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 1. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

## II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Final Judgment:

A. "Advertiser" means an advertiser, an advertiser's buying agent, or an advertiser's representative.

B. "Agreement" means any agreement, understanding, pact, contract, or arrangement, formal or informal, oral or written, between two or more Persons.

C. "Communicate," "Communicating," and "Communication(s)" means to provide, send, discuss, circulate, exchange, request, or solicit information, whether directly or indirectly, and regardless of the means by which it is accomplished, including orally or by written means of any kind, such as electronic communications, e-mails, facsimiles, telephone communications, voicemails, text messages, audio recordings, meetings, interviews, correspondence, exchange of written or recorded information, or face-to-face meetings.

D. "Competitively Sensitive Information" means any of the following information, less than eighteen months old, of Defendant or any broadcast television station regarding the sale of spot advertising on broadcast television stations: Non-Public Information relating to pricing or pricing strategies, pacing, holding capacity, revenues, or market shares. Reports containing only aggregated market-level or national data are not Competitively Sensitive Information, but reports (including by paid subscription) that are customized or confidential to a particular Station or broadcast television station group are Competitively Sensitive Information.

E. "Cooperative Agreement" means (1) joint sales agreements, joint operating agreements, local marketing agreements, news share agreements, or shared services agreements, or (2) any agreement through which a Person exercises control over any broadcast television station not owned by the Person.

F. "Defendant" means Nexstar Media Group, Inc., a Delaware corporation with its headquarters in Irving, Texas, its successors and assigns, and its subsidiaries, divisions, and Stations, and their directors, officers, and employees.

G. "DMA" means Designated Market Area as defined by A.C. Nielsen Company and

used by the *Investing in Television BIA Market Report 2018*.

H. "Management" means all directors and officers of Defendant, or any other employee with management or supervisory responsibilities for Defendant's business or operations related to the sale of spot advertising on any Station.

I. "Non-Public Information" means information that is not available from public sources or generally available to the public. Measurement or quantification of a Station's future holding capacity is Non-Public Information, but measurement or quantification of a Station's past holding capacity is not Non-Public Information. For the avoidance of doubt, the fact that information is available by paid subscription does not on its own render the information public.

J. "Person" means any natural person, corporation, company, partnership, joint venture, firm, association, proprietorship, agency, board, authority, commission, office, or other business or legal entity, whether private or governmental.

K. "Sales Representative Firm" means any organization, including without limitation Katz Media Group, Inc. and Cox Repts, Inc., and their respective subsidiaries and divisions, that represents a Station or its owner in the sale of spot advertising.

L. "Sales Representative Firm Manager" means, for each of Defendant's Sales Representative Firms, the employee of the Sales Representative Firm with primary responsibility for the relationship with Defendant.

M. "Sales Staff" means Defendant's employees with responsibility for the sale of spot advertising on any Station.

N. "Station" means any broadcast television station, its successors and assigns, and its subsidiaries, divisions, groups, and its owner or operator and its directors, officers, managers, and employees, unless a Station owns, is owned by, or is under common ownership with a Sales Representative Firm, in which case that Sales Representative Firm will not be considered a Station.

## III. APPLICABILITY

This Final Judgment applies to Defendant, other Persons in active concert or participation with Defendant who receive actual notice of this Final Judgment by personal service or otherwise, and any Person that signs an Acknowledgment of Applicability, attached as Exhibit 2, to the extent set forth therein, as a condition of the purchase of a Station owned by Defendant as of October 1, 2018. This Final Judgment applies to Defendant's actions performed under any Cooperative Agreement, even if those actions are taken on behalf of a third party. This Final Judgment is fully enforceable, including by penalty of contempt, against all of the foregoing.

## IV. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

A. Defendant's Management and Sales Staff shall not, directly or indirectly:

1. Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information to any Station in the same DMA it does not own or operate;

2. Knowingly use Competitively Sensitive Information from or regarding any Station in the same DMA it does not own or operate;

3. Encourage or facilitate the Communication of Competitively Sensitive Information to or from any Station in the same DMA it does not own or operate; or

4. Attempt to enter into, enter into, maintain, or enforce any agreement to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information with any Station in the same DMA it does not own or operate.

B. The prohibitions under Paragraph IV(A) apply to Defendant's Communicating or agreeing to Communicate through a Sales Representative Firm or a third-party agent at Defendant's instruction or request.

C. Defendant shall not sell any Station owned by the Defendant as of October 1, 2018 to any Person unless that Person has first executed the Acknowledgment of Applicability, attached as Exhibit 2. Defendant shall submit any Acknowledgment of Applicability to the United States within 15 days of consummating the sale of such Station. The United States, in its sole discretion, may waive the prohibition in this Paragraph IV(C) on a Station-by-Station basis. Alternatively, the United States and the Person signing the Acknowledgment of Applicability may agree to void the Acknowledgment of Applicability at any time. The first sentence of this paragraph shall not apply to the sale of any Station to a Person already bound to a final judgment entered by a court regarding the Communication of Competitively Sensitive Information.

## V. CONDUCT NOT PROHIBITED

A. Nothing in Section IV shall prohibit Defendant from Communicating, using, or encouraging or facilitating the Communication of, Competitively Sensitive Information with an actual or prospective Advertiser, except that, if the Advertiser is another Station, Defendant's Communicating, using, or encouraging or facilitating the Communication of, Competitively Sensitive Information is excluded from the terms of Section IV only insofar as is reasonably necessary to negotiate the sale of spot advertising on broadcast television stations. For the avoidance of doubt, Defendant is not prohibited from internally using Competitively Sensitive Information received from an Advertiser that is a Station under the preceding sentence, but Defendant is prohibited from Communicating that Competitively Sensitive Information to a Station in the same DMA that it does not own or operate.

B. Nothing in Section IV shall prohibit Defendant from, after securing advice of counsel and in consultation with the Antitrust Compliance Officer, Communicating, using, encouraging or facilitating the Communication of, or attempting to enter into, entering into, maintaining, or enforcing any agreement to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information with any Station when such Communication or use is (a) for the purpose of evaluating or effectuating a bona fide acquisition, disposition, or exchange of Stations or related assets, or (b) reasonably

necessary for achieving the efficiencies of any other legitimate competitor collaboration. With respect to any such agreement:

1. For all agreements under Part V(B)(a) with any other Station to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information that Defendant enters into, renews, or affirmatively extends after the date of entry of this Final Judgment, Defendant shall maintain documents sufficient to show:

i. the specific transaction or proposed transaction to which the sharing of Competitively Sensitive Information relates;

ii. the employees, identified with reasonable specificity, who are involved in the sharing of Competitively Sensitive Information; and

iii. the termination date or event of the sharing of Competitively Sensitive Information.

2. All agreements under Part V(B)(b) with any other Station to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information that Defendant enters into, renews, or affirmatively extends after the date of entry of this Final Judgment shall be in writing, and shall:

i. identify and describe, with specificity, the collaboration to which it is ancillary;

ii. be narrowly tailored to permit the Communication of Competitively Sensitive Information only when reasonably necessary and only to the employees reasonably necessary to effectuate the collaboration;

iii. identify with reasonable specificity the Competitively Sensitive Information Communicated pursuant to the agreement and identify the employees to receive the Competitively Sensitive Information;

iv. contain a specific termination date or event; and

v. be signed by all parties to the agreement, including any modifications to the agreement.

3. For Communications under Part V(B)(a) above, Defendant shall maintain copies of all materials required under Paragraph V(B)(1) for five years or the duration of the Final Judgment, whichever is shorter, following entry into any agreement to Communicate or receive Competitively Sensitive Information, and Defendant shall make such documents available to the United States upon request, if such request is made during the preservation period.

4. For Communications under Part V(B)(b) above, Defendant shall furnish a copy of all materials required under Paragraph V(B)(2) to the United States within thirty days of the entry, renewal, or extension of the agreement.

5. For purposes of this Section V(B) only, a Joint Sales Agreement, Local Marketing Agreement, or similar agreement pursuant to which the Defendant Communicates, uses, encourages or facilitates the Communication of, or attempts to enter into, enters into, maintains, or enforces any agreement to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information related solely to the sale of spot advertising for which Defendant is responsible on a Station, shall be considered a "legitimate competitor collaboration" under Part V(B)(b).

C. Nothing in Section IV shall prohibit Defendant from engaging in conduct in

accordance with the doctrine established in *Eastern Railroad Presidents Conference v. Noerr Motor Freight, Inc.*, 365 U.S. 127 (1961), *United Mine Workers v. Pennington*, 381 U.S. 657 (1965), and their progeny.

D. Nothing in Section IV prohibits Defendant from (1) Communicating, encouraging or facilitating the Communication of, or attempting to enter into, entering into, maintaining, or enforcing any agreement to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information for the purpose of aggregation if (a) Competitively Sensitive Information is sent to or received from, and the aggregation is managed by, a third party not owned or operated by any Station; (b) the information disseminated by the aggregator is limited to historical total broadcast television station revenue or other geographic or characteristic categorization (e.g., national, local, or political sales revenue); and (c) any information disseminated is sufficiently aggregated such that it would not allow a recipient to identify, deduce, or estimate the prices or pacing of any individual broadcast television station not owned or operated by that recipient; or (2) using information that meets the requirements of Parts V(D)(1)(a)–(c).

#### VI. REQUIRED CONDUCT

A. Within ten days of entry of this Final Judgment, Defendant shall appoint an Antitrust Compliance Officer who is an internal employee or Officer of the Defendant, and identify to the United States the Antitrust Compliance Officer's name, business address, telephone number, and email address. Within forty-five days of a vacancy in the Antitrust Compliance Officer position, Defendant shall appoint a replacement, and shall identify to the United States the Antitrust Compliance Officer's name, business address, telephone number, and email address. Defendant's initial or replacement appointment of an Antitrust Compliance Officer is subject to the approval of the United States, in its sole discretion.

B. The Antitrust Compliance Officer shall have, or shall retain outside counsel who has, the following minimum qualifications:

1. be an active member in good standing of the bar in any U.S. jurisdiction; and

2. have at least five years' experience in legal practice, including experience with antitrust matters, unless finding an Antitrust Compliance Officer or outside counsel meeting this experience requirement is a hardship on or is not reasonably available to the Defendant, under which circumstances the Defendant may select an Antitrust Compliance Officer or shall retain outside counsel who has at least five years' experience in legal practice, including experience with regulatory or compliance matters.

C. The Antitrust Compliance Officer shall, directly or through the employees or counsel working at the Antitrust Compliance Officer's responsibility and direction:

1. within fourteen days of entry of the Final Judgment, furnish to all of Defendant's Management and Sales Staff and Sales Representative Firm Managers a copy of this Final Judgment, the Competitive Impact Statement filed by the United States with the

Court, and a cover letter in a form attached as Exhibit 1;

2. within fourteen days of entry of the Final Judgment, in a manner to be devised by Defendant and approved by the United States, provide Defendant's Management and Sales Staff reasonable notice of the meaning and requirements of this Final Judgment;

3. annually brief Defendant's Management and Sales Staff on the meaning and requirements of this Final Judgment and the U.S. antitrust laws;

4. brief any person who succeeds a person in any position identified in Paragraph VI(C)(3), within sixty days of such succession;

5. obtain from each person designated in Paragraph VI(C)(3) or VI(C)(4), within thirty days of that person's receipt of the Final Judgment, a certification that the person (i) has read and understands and agrees to abide by the terms of this Final Judgment; (ii) is not aware of any violation of the Final Judgment that has not been reported to Defendant; and (iii) understands that failure to comply with this Final Judgment may result in an enforcement action for civil or criminal contempt of court;

6. annually communicate to Defendant's Management and Sales Staff that they may disclose to the Antitrust Compliance Officer, without reprisal for such disclosure, information concerning any violation or potential violation of this Final Judgment or the U.S. antitrust laws by Defendant;

7. within thirty days of the latest filing of the Complaint, Proposed Final Judgment, or Competitive Impact Statement in this action, Defendant shall provide notice, in each DMA in which Defendant owns or operates a Station, to (i) every full power Station in that DMA that sells broadcast television spot advertising that Defendant does not own or operate and (ii) any Sales Representative Firm selling advertising in that DMA on behalf of Defendant, of the Complaint, Proposed Final Judgment, and Competitive Impact Statement in a form and manner to be proposed by Defendant and approved by the United States in its sole discretion. Defendant shall provide the United States with its proposal, including the list of recipients, within ten days of the filing of the Complaint; and

8. maintain for five years or until expiration of the Final Judgment, whichever is shorter, a copy of all materials required to be issued under Paragraph VI(C), and furnish them to the United States within ten days if requested to do so, except documents protected under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work-product doctrine. For all materials required to be furnished under Paragraph VI(C) which Defendant claims are protected under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work-product doctrine, Defendant shall furnish to the United States a privilege log.

D. Defendant shall:

1. upon Management or the Antitrust Compliance Officer learning of any violation or potential violation of any of the terms and conditions contained in this Final Judgment, (i) promptly take appropriate action to investigate, and in the event of a violation, terminate or modify the activity so as to

comply with this Final Judgment, (ii) maintain all documents related to any violation or potential violation of this Final Judgment for a period of five years or the duration of this Final Judgment, whichever is shorter, and (iii) maintain, and furnish to the United States at the United States' request, a log of (a) all such documents and documents for which Defendant claims protection under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine, and (b) all potential and actual violations, even if no documentary evidence regarding the violations exist;

2. within thirty days of Management or the Antitrust Compliance Officer learning of any such violation or potential violation of any of the terms and conditions contained in this Final Judgment, file with the United States a statement describing any violation or potential violation of any of the terms and conditions contained in this Final Judgment, which shall include a description of any Communications constituting the violation or potential violation, including the date and place of the Communication, the Persons involved, and the subject matter of the Communication;

3. establish a whistleblower protection policy, which provides that any employee may disclose, without reprisal for such disclosure, to the Antitrust Compliance Officer information concerning any violation or potential violation by the Defendant of this Final Judgment or U.S. antitrust laws;

4. have its CEO, General Counsel or Chief Legal Officer certify in writing to the United States annually on the anniversary date of the entry of this Final Judgment that Defendant has complied with the provisions of this Final Judgment;

5. maintain and produce to the United States upon request: (i) a list identifying all employees having received the annual antitrust briefing required under Paragraphs VI(C)(3) and VI(C)(4); and (ii) copies of all materials distributed as part of the annual antitrust briefing required under Paragraphs VI(C)(3) and VI(C)(4). For all materials requested to be produced under this Paragraph VI(D)(5) for which Defendant claims is protected under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work-product doctrine, Defendant shall furnish to the United States a privilege log; and

6. instruct each Sales Representative Firm Manager that the Sales Representative Firm shall not Communicate any of Defendant's Competitively Sensitive Information in a way that would violate Sections IV and V of this Final Judgment if the Sales Representative Firm were included in the definition of "Defendant" in Paragraph II(F), in a form and manner to be proposed by Defendant and approved by the United States in its sole discretion, maintained and produced to the United States upon request.

E. For the avoidance of doubt, the term "potential violation" as used in Paragraph VI(D) does not include the discussion of future conduct.

F. If Defendant acquires a Station after entry of this Final Judgment, this Section VI will not apply to that acquired Station or the employees of that acquired Station until 120 days after closing of the acquisition of that acquired Station.

## VII. DEFENDANT'S COOPERATION

A. Defendant shall cooperate fully and truthfully with the United States in any investigation or litigation examining whether or alleging that Defendant, any Station that Defendant does not own or operate, or any Sales Representative Firm Communicated Competitively Sensitive Information with or among Defendant or any other Station or any Sales Representative Firm in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 1. Defendant shall use its best efforts to ensure that all current and former officers, directors, employees, and agents also fully and promptly cooperate with the United States. The full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of Defendant shall include, but not be limited to:

1. providing sworn testimony, that is not protected by the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine, to the United States regarding the Communicated of Competitively Sensitive Information or any agreement with any other Station it does not own or such other Station's Sales Representative Firm to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information while an employee of the Defendant;

2. producing, upon request of the United States, all documents, data, and other materials, wherever located, to the extent not protected under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work-product doctrine, in the possession, custody, or control of Defendant, that relate to the Communication of Competitively Sensitive Information or any agreement with any other Station or such other Station's Sales Representative Firm to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information, and a log of documents protected by the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine;

3. making available for interview any officers, directors, employees, and agents of Defendant if so requested on reasonable notice by the United States; and

4. testifying at trial and other judicial proceedings fully, truthfully, and under oath, when called upon to do so by the United States;

5. provided however, that the obligations of Defendant to cooperate fully with the United States as described in this Section VII shall cease upon the conclusion of all of the United States' investigations and the United States' litigations examining whether or alleging that Defendant, any Station that Defendant does not own or operate or such other Station's Sales Representative Firm Communicated Competitively Sensitive Information or with or among Defendant or any other Station or any Sales Representative Firm in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 1, including exhaustion of all appeals or expiration of time for all appeals of any Court ruling in each such matter, at which point the United States will provide written notice to Defendant that its obligations under this Section VII have expired.

B. Defendant is obligated to impose a litigation hold until the United States provides written notice to the Defendant that its obligations under this Section VII have expired. This Paragraph VII(B) does not apply to documents created after entry of this Final Judgment.

C. Subject to the full, truthful, and continuing cooperation of Defendant, as defined in Paragraph VII(A), the United States will not bring any further civil action or any criminal charges against Defendant related to any Communication of Competitively Sensitive Information or any agreement to Communicate Competitively Sensitive Information with any other Station it does not own or operate or such other Station's Sales Representative Firm when that agreement:

1. was Communicated, entered into and terminated on or before the date of the filing of the Complaint in this action (or in the case of a Station that is acquired by Defendant after entry of this Final Judgment, was Communicated or entered into before the acquisition and terminated within 120 days after the closing of the acquisition); and

2. does not constitute or include an agreement to fix prices or divide markets.

D. The United States' agreement set forth in Paragraph VII(C) does not apply to any acts of perjury or subornation of perjury (18 U.S.C. §§ 1621–22), making a false statement or declaration (18 U.S.C. §§ 1001, 1623), contempt (18 U.S.C. §§ 401–402), or obstruction of justice (18 U.S.C. § 1503, *et seq.*) by the Defendant or its officers, directors, and employees. The United States' agreement set forth in Paragraph VII(C) does not release any claims against any Sales Representative Firm.

## VIII. COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

A. For the purposes of determining or securing compliance with this Final Judgment or of any related orders, or of determining whether the Final Judgment should be modified, and subject to any legally recognized privilege, from time to time authorized representatives of the United States Department of Justice, including consultants and other persons retained by the United States, shall, upon written request of an authorized representative of the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, and on reasonable notice to Defendant, be permitted:

1. to access during Defendant's office hours to inspect and copy, or at the option of the United States, to require Defendant to provide electronic or hard copies of all books, ledgers, accounts, records, data, and documents in the possession, custody, or control of Defendant, relating to any matters that are the subject of this Final Judgment, not protected by the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine; and

2. to interview, either informally or on the record, Defendant's officers, employees, or agents, who may have their individual counsel present, regarding such matters. The interviews shall be subject to the reasonable convenience of the interviewee and without restraint or interference by Defendant; and

3. to obtain from Defendant written reports or responses to written interrogatories, of information not protected by the attorney-client privilege or attorney work product doctrine, under oath if requested, relating to any matters that are the subject of this Final Judgment as may be requested.

B. No information or documents obtained by the means provided in this Section VIII

shall be divulged by the United States to any Person other than an authorized representative of the executive branch of the United States, except in the course of legal proceedings to which the United States is a party (including grand jury proceedings), or for the purpose of securing compliance with this Final Judgment, or for law enforcement purposes, or as otherwise required by law.

C. If at the time information or documents are furnished by Defendant to the United States, Defendant represents and identifies in writing the material in any such information or documents to which a claim of protection may be asserted under Rule 26(c)(1)(G) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and Defendant marks each pertinent page of such material, "Subject to claim of protection under Rule 26(c)(1)(G) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure," then the United States shall give Defendant ten calendar days' notice prior to divulging such material in any legal proceeding (other than a grand jury proceeding).

#### IX. RETENTION OF JURISDICTION

This Court retains jurisdiction to enable any party to this Final Judgment to apply to this Court at any time for further orders and directions as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out or construe this Final Judgment, to modify any of its provisions, to enforce compliance, and to punish violations of its provisions.

#### X. ENFORCEMENT OF FINAL JUDGMENT

A. The United States retains and reserves all rights to enforce the provisions of this Final Judgment, including its right to seek an order of contempt from this Court. Defendant agrees that in any civil contempt action, any motion to show cause, or any similar civil action brought by the United States regarding an alleged violation of this Final Judgment, the United States may establish a violation of the decree and the appropriateness of any remedy therefor by a preponderance of the evidence, and Defendant waives any argument that a different standard of proof should apply.

B. The Final Judgment should be interpreted to give full effect to the procompetitive purposes of the antitrust laws and to restore all competition the United States alleged was harmed by the challenged conduct. Defendant agrees that it may be held in contempt of, and that the Court may enforce, any provision of this Final Judgment that, as interpreted by the Court in light of these procompetitive principles and applying ordinary tools of interpretation, is stated specifically and in reasonable detail, whether or not it is clear and unambiguous on its face. In any such interpretation, the terms of this Final Judgment should not be construed against either party as the drafter.

C. In any enforcement proceeding in which the Court finds that Defendant has violated this Final Judgment, the United States may apply to the Court for a one-time extension of this Final Judgment, together with such other relief as may be appropriate. In connection with any successful effort by the United States to enforce this Final Judgment against Defendant, whether litigated or resolved prior to litigation, Defendant agrees

to reimburse the United States for the fees and expenses of its attorneys, as well as any other costs including experts' fees, incurred in connection with that enforcement effort, including in the investigation of the potential violation.

#### XI. EXPIRATION OF FINAL JUDGMENT

Unless this Court grants an extension, this Final Judgment shall expire seven years from the date of its entry, except that after five years from the date of its entry, this Final Judgment may be terminated upon notice by the United States to the Court and Defendant that the continuation of the Final Judgment no longer is necessary or in the public interest.

#### XII. NOTICE

For purposes of this Final Judgment, any notice or other communication required to be provided to the United States shall be sent to the person at the address set forth below (or such other addresses as the United States may specify in writing to Defendant):

Chief, Media, Entertainment, and Professional Services Section, U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 450 Fifth Street NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20530

#### XIII. PUBLIC INTEREST DETERMINATION

Entry of this Final Judgment is in the public interest. The parties have complied with the requirements of the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C. § 16, including making copies available to the public of this Final Judgment, the Competitive Impact Statement, and any comments thereon and the United States' responses to comments. Based upon the record before the Court, which includes the Competitive Impact Statement and any comments and response to comments filed with the Court, entry of this Final Judgment is in the public interest.

IT IS SO ORDERED by the Court, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_\_.

Court approval subject to procedures of Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C. § 16

United States District Judge

#### EXHIBIT 1

[Company Letterhead]  
[Name and Address of Antitrust Compliance Officer]

Re: *Prohibitions Against Sharing of Competitively Sensitive Information*

Dear [XX]:

I provide you this notice regarding a judgment recently entered by a federal judge in Washington, D.C. prohibiting the sharing of certain information with other broadcast television station(s).

The judgment applies to our company and all of its employees, including you, so it is important that you understand the obligations it imposes on us. [CEO Name] has asked me to let each of you know that [s/he] expects you to take these obligations seriously and abide by them.

The judgment prohibits us from sharing or receiving, directly or indirectly (including through our national sales representative

firm), competitively sensitive information with or from any employee, agent, or representative of another broadcast television station in the same DMA it does not own or operate. Competitively sensitive information means any non-public information regarding the sale of spot advertising on broadcast television stations, including information relating to any pricing or pricing strategies, pacing, holding capacity, revenues, or market shares. There are limited exceptions to this restriction, which are listed in the judgment. The company will provide briefing on the legitimate or illegitimate exchange of information. You must consult with me if you have any questions on whether a particular circumstance is subject to an exception under the judgment.

A copy of the judgment is attached. Please read it carefully and familiarize yourself with its terms. The judgment, rather than the above description, is controlling. If you have any questions about the judgment or how it affects your sale of spot advertising, please contact me as soon as possible.

Please sign and return the attached Employee Certification to [Defendant's Antitrust Compliance Officer] within thirty days of your receipt of this letter. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

[Defendant's Antitrust Compliance Officer]

#### Employee Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [name], \_\_\_\_\_ [position] at \_\_\_\_\_ [station or location] do hereby certify that I (i) have read and understand, and agree to abide by, the terms of the Final Judgment; (ii) am not aware of any violation of the Final Judgment that has not been reported to [Defendant]; and (iii) understand that my failure to comply with this Final Judgment may result in an enforcement action for civil or criminal contempt of court.

Name:

Date:

#### EXHIBIT 2

#### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

*United States of America*; Plaintiff, v. *Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., et al.*, Defendants.

Case No. 1:18-cv-2609

Judge: Tanya S. Chutkan

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF APPLICABILITY

The undersigned acknowledges that [Full Buyer Name], including its successors and assigns, and its subsidiaries, divisions, and broadcast television stations, and their directors, officers, and employees ("Acquirer"), following consummation of the Acquirer's acquisition of [insert names of station or stations acquired] (each, an "Acquired Station"), is bound by the Final Judgment entered by this Court on [date] ("Final Judgment"), as if the Acquirer were a Defendant under the Final Judgment, as follows:

1. The Acquirer shall be bound in full by all Sections of the Consent Decree not specifically discussed below.

2. As to Sections IV, V, and VII of the Final Judgment, the Acquirer is bound to the Final

Judgment only as to (i) each Acquired Station, each Acquired Station's successors and assigns, and each Acquired Station's subsidiaries and divisions, and each Acquired Station's directors, officers, and employees, (ii) Acquirer's officers and directors only with respect to any responsibilities or actions regarding any Acquired Stations, and (iii) employees with management or supervisory responsibilities for Acquirer's business or operations related to the sale of spot advertising on any Acquired Station, only with respect to those responsibilities.

3. As to Section VI(C)(3), VI(C)(4), VI(C)(6), VI(C)(8), VI(D), VI(E), and VIII of the Final Judgment, the Acquirer is bound to the Final Judgment only as to (i) each Acquired Station, each Acquired Station's successors and assigns, and each Acquired Station's subsidiaries and divisions, and each Acquired Station's directors, officers, and employees, (ii) Acquirer's officers and directors, and (iii) employees with management or supervisory responsibilities for Acquirer's business or operations related to the sale of spot advertising on any Acquired Station.

4. The release contained in Sections VII(C) and (D) applies to the Acquirer, but only to civil actions or criminal charges arising from actions taken by any Acquired Station.

5. The Acquirer shall not be bound by Sections VI(C)(1), VI(C)(2), VI(C)(5), VI(C)(7), and VI(F) of the Final Judgment at all.

6. Section VI(A) applies to the Acquirer, but is modified to make the initial period for appointing an Antitrust Compliance Officer in the first sentence 120 days from consummation of the Acquirer's acquisition of the Acquired Station or Acquired Stations.

This Acknowledgement of Applicability may be voided by a joint written agreement between the United States and the Acquirer.

Dated: [ ]

Respectfully submitted,

[Counsel for Acquirer]

#### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

*United States of America*, Plaintiff, v.  
*Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc., Raycom Media, Inc., Tribune Media Company, Meredith Corporation, Griffin Communications, LLC, Dreamcatcher Broadcasting, LLC, and Nexstar Media Group, Inc.*, Defendants.

Case No. 1:18-cv-2609-TSC

Judge: Tanya S. Chutkan

#### COMPETITIVE IMPACT STATEMENT AS TO DEFENDANT NEXSTAR MEDIA GROUP, INC.

Plaintiff United States of America ("United States"), pursuant to Section 2(b) of the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C. § 16(b)-(h) ("APPA" or "Tunney Act"), files this Competitive Impact Statement relating to the proposed Final Judgment against Defendant Nexstar Media Group, Inc. ("Nexstar"), submitted for entry in this civil antitrust proceeding.

#### I. Nature and Purpose of the Proceeding

On November 13, 2018, the United States filed a civil antitrust complaint alleging that six Defendants agreed among themselves and other broadcast television stations in many local markets to reciprocally exchange station-specific, competitively sensitive information regarding spot advertising revenues. The Complaint alleges those Defendants' agreements are unreasonable restraints of trade that are unlawful under Section 1 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1. The Complaint seeks injunctive relief to prevent those Defendants from exchanging competitively sensitive information with and among competing broadcast television stations. On December 13, 2018, the United States filed an Amended Complaint, adding Nexstar as a Defendant. Besides this addition, the Amended Complaint is the same as the Complaint in all material respects.

Along with the Amended Complaint, the United States filed a proposed Final Judgment for Nexstar. The proposed Final Judgment prohibits sharing of competitively sensitive information, requires Nexstar to implement antitrust compliance training programs, and imposes cooperation and reporting requirements.

The United States and Nexstar have stipulated that the proposed Final Judgment may be entered after compliance with the APPA, unless the United States withdraws its consent. Entry of the proposed Final Judgment would terminate this action, except that the Court would retain jurisdiction to construe, modify, or enforce the provisions of the proposed Final Judgment and to punish violations thereof.

#### II. Description of the Events Giving Rise to the Alleged Violation

##### A. Industry Background

Broadcast television stations sell advertising time to businesses that want to advertise their products to television viewers. Broadcast television "spot" advertising,<sup>1</sup> which typically comprises the majority of a station's revenues, is sold directly by the station itself or through its sales representatives to advertisers who want to target viewers in specific geographic areas called Designated Market Areas ("DMAs").<sup>2</sup>

Broadcast stations typically make their spot advertising sales through two channels: (1) local sales, which are sales made by the station's own local sales staff to advertisers who are usually located within the DMA; and (2) national sales, which are sales made either by the broadcast group's national sales

<sup>1</sup> Spot advertising differs from other types of television advertising, such as network and syndicated television advertising, which are sold by television networks and producers of syndicated programs on a nationwide basis and broadcast in every market where the network or syndicated program is aired.

<sup>2</sup> A DMA is a geographical unit designated by the A.C. Nielsen Company, a company that surveys television viewers and furnishes data to aid in evaluating television audiences. There are 210 DMAs in the United States. DMAs are widely accepted by television stations, advertisers, and advertising agencies as the standard geographic area to use in evaluating television audience size and demographic composition.

staff or by a national sales representative firm ("Sales Rep Firm") to regional or national advertisers.

Nexstar owns or operates 105 broadcast television stations in 93 DMAs.

Nexstar, along with certain other television broadcast station groups, compete in various configurations in multiple DMAs across the United States. Nexstar sells spot advertising time to advertisers that seek to target viewers in the DMAs in which Nexstar operates. Prices are individually negotiated with advertisers, and advertisers are able to "play off" the stations against each other to obtain competitive rates.

There are two primary Sales Rep Firms in the United States today, and each represents hundreds of television stations throughout the country in the sale of national advertising time. It is common for one Sales Rep Firm to represent multiple competing stations in the same DMA. In such cases, the stations and the Sales Rep Firms purportedly create firewalls to prevent coordination and information sharing between the sales teams representing competing stations.

##### B. The Exchanges of Competitively Sensitive Information

The Amended Complaint alleges that Nexstar and other broadcasters have agreed in many DMAs to reciprocally exchange station-specific revenue pacing data. Revenue pacing data compares a station's revenues booked for a certain time period to the revenues booked for the same point in time in the previous year, indicating how each station is performing versus the rest of the market and providing insight into each station's remaining spot advertising inventory for the current period or future periods. The exchanges were systematic and typically included non-public pacing data on national revenues, local revenues, or both, depending on the DMA. The Amended Complaint further alleges that Nexstar engaged in the exchange of other forms of competitively sensitive information relating to spot advertising in certain DMAs.

The Amended Complaint alleges that Nexstar exchanged pacing information in at least two ways. First, Nexstar and other television broadcast stations exchanged information through the Sales Rep Firms. The information was passed both within and between Sales Rep Firms representing competing stations, and was done with Nexstar's knowledge and frequently at Nexstar's instruction. Second, in some DMAs, Nexstar and other broadcasters exchanged pacing information directly between local station employees.

The Amended Complaint alleges that these exchanges of pacing information allowed stations to better understand, in real time, the availability of inventory on competitors' stations, which is often a key factor affecting negotiations with buyers over spot advertising prices. The exchanges also helped stations to anticipate whether competitors were likely to raise, maintain, or lower spot advertising prices. Understanding competitors' pacing can help stations gauge competitors' and advertisers' negotiation strategies, inform their own pricing strategies, and help them resist more

effectively advertisers' attempts to obtain lower prices by playing stations off of one another. Nexstar's information exchanges therefore distorted the normal price-setting mechanism in the spot advertising market and harmed the competitive process within the affected DMAs.

### III. Explanation of the Proposed Final Judgment

The provisions of the proposed Final Judgment closely track the relief sought in the Amended Complaint and are intended to provide prompt, certain, and effective remedies that will ensure that Nexstar and its employees and sales representatives will not impede competition by sharing competitively sensitive information, directly or indirectly, including through Sales Rep Firms, with its rival broadcast television stations. The requirements and prohibitions in the proposed Final Judgment will terminate Nexstar's illegal conduct, prevent recurrence of the same or similar conduct, ensure that Nexstar establishes an antitrust compliance program, and provides the United States with cooperation in its ongoing investigation. The proposed Final Judgment protects competition and consumers by putting a stop to the anticompetitive information sharing alleged in the Amended Complaint.

#### A. Prohibited Conduct

The proposed Final Judgment broadly prohibits Nexstar from sharing competitively sensitive information with rival broadcast television stations in the same DMA. Specifically, Section IV ensures that Nexstar will not, directly or indirectly, communicate competitively sensitive information, including pricing or pricing strategies, pacing, holding capacity, revenues, or market shares, to broadcast television stations in the same DMA or to those stations' sales representatives and agents.

The proposed Final Judgment provides that its provisions will apply to stations owned by Nexstar even if Nexstar sells those stations to new buyers. In particular, Paragraph IV(C) provides that Nexstar may not sell any stations it owns as of October 1, 2018, unless the buyer has executed an Acknowledgement that each station will continue to be bound by the terms of the proposed Final Judgment. The United States, in its discretion, may waive this requirement on a station-by-station basis, or alternatively the buyer and the United States may agree to void the Acknowledgement after the sale has been consummated.

#### B. Conduct Not Prohibited

Section V makes clear that the proposed Final Judgment does not prohibit Nexstar from sharing or receiving competitively sensitive information in certain specified circumstances where the information sharing appears unlikely to cause harm to competition. Paragraph V(A) allows Nexstar to communicate competitively sensitive information to advertising customers or prospective customers. Paragraph V(B) allows for the communication of competitively sensitive information with other broadcasters (i) for purposes of evaluating or effectuating a transaction, such as the purchase or sale of a station; or (ii)

when reasonably necessary for achieving the efficiencies of a legitimate collaboration among competitors, such as a lawful joint venture.<sup>3</sup> Paragraph V(C) confirms that the proposed Final Judgment does not prohibit petitioning conduct protected by the Noerr-Pennington doctrine. Paragraph V(D) permits the exchange of competitively sensitive information through certain third-party aggregation services under the conditions listed in that paragraph, including that the aggregated data does not permit individual stations to identify, deduce, or estimate the prices or pacing of their competitors.

#### C. Antitrust Compliance Obligations

Under Section VI of the proposed Final Judgment, Nexstar must designate an Antitrust Compliance Officer who is responsible for implementing training and antitrust compliance programs and ensuring compliance with the Final Judgment. Among other duties, the Antitrust Compliance Officer will be required to distribute copies of the Final Judgment and ensure that training on the Final Judgment and the antitrust laws is provided to Nexstar's management and sales staff. Section VI also requires Nexstar to establish an antitrust whistleblower policy and remedy and report violations of the Final Judgment. Under Paragraph VI(D)(4), Nexstar, through its CEO, General Counsel, or Chief Legal Officer, must certify annual compliance with the Final Judgment. This compliance program is necessary in light of the extensive history of communications among rival stations that facilitated Nexstar's agreements.

#### D. Defendants' Cooperation

As outlined in Section VII, Nexstar must cooperate fully and truthfully with the United States in any investigation or litigation relating to the sharing of competitively sensitive information in the broadcast television industry. The required cooperation may include providing sworn testimony, employee interviews, and/or documents and data.

Paragraph VII(C) provides that, subject to Nexstar's truthful and continuing cooperation as defined in Paragraphs VII(A) and (B), the United States will not bring further civil actions or criminal charges against Nexstar for any agreement to share competitively sensitive information with any other station or Sales Rep Firm when the agreement: (1) was entered into and terminated before the date of the filing of the Complaint and (2) does not constitute or include an agreement to fix prices or divide markets.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph V(B)(5) states that, for purposes of Paragraph V(B) only, certain types of Joint Sales Agreements, Local Marketing Agreements, and similar agreements qualify as a "legitimate competitor collaboration" under Paragraph V(B)(b). Paragraph V(B)(5) was included in recognition of the fact that some broadcasters have entered into a number of these agreements in various DMAs. The question of whether these agreements have any effect on competition was outside the scope of the United States' investigation in this matter. Accordingly, Paragraph V(B)(5) should not be read as an admission that such agreements otherwise comply with the antitrust laws, and the United States takes no position on that question for purposes of this proceeding.

#### E. Enforcement of Final Judgment

The proposed Final Judgment contains provisions designed to promote compliance and make the enforcement of Division consent decrees as effective as possible. Paragraph X(A) provides that the United States retains and reserves all rights to enforce the provisions of the proposed Final Judgment, including its rights to seek an order of contempt from the Court. Nexstar has agreed that in any civil contempt action, any motion to show cause, or any similar action brought by the United States regarding an alleged violation of the Final Judgment, the United States may establish the violation and the appropriateness of any remedy by a preponderance of the evidence and that Nexstar has waived any argument that a different standard of proof should apply. This provision aligns the standard for compliance obligations with the standard of proof that applies to the underlying offense that the compliance commitments address.

Paragraph X(B) provides additional clarification regarding the interpretation of the provisions of the proposed Final Judgment. The proposed Final Judgment was drafted to restore all competition the United States alleged was harmed by Nexstar's challenged conduct. Nexstar agrees that it will abide by the proposed Final Judgment, and that it may be held in contempt of this Court for failing to comply with any provision of the proposed Final Judgment that is stated specifically and in reasonable detail, whether or not it is clear and unambiguous on its face, and as interpreted in light of this procompetitive purpose.

Paragraph X(C) further provides that, should the Court find in an enforcement proceeding that Nexstar has violated the Final Judgment, the United States may apply to the Court for a one-time extension of the Final Judgment, together with such other relief as may be appropriate. In addition, in order to compensate American taxpayers for any costs associated with the investigation and enforcement of violations of a proposed Final Judgment, Paragraph X(C) provides that in any successful effort by the United States to enforce the Final Judgment against Nexstar, whether litigated or resolved before litigation, Nexstar agrees to reimburse the United States for any attorneys' fees, experts' fees, or costs incurred in connection with any enforcement effort, including the investigation of the potential violation.

Finally, Section XI of the proposed Final Judgment provides that the Final Judgment shall expire seven years from the date of its entry, except that after five years from the date of its entry, the Final Judgment may be terminated upon notice by the United States to the Court and Nexstar that the continuation of the Final Judgment is no longer necessary or in the public interest.

#### IV. Remedies Available to Potential Private Litigants

Section 4 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 15, provides that any person who has been injured as a result of conduct prohibited by the antitrust laws may bring suit in federal court to recover three times the damages the person has suffered, as well as costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. Entry of the



proposed Final Judgment will neither impair nor assist the bringing of any private antitrust damage action. Under the provisions of Section 5(a) of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 16(a), the proposed Final Judgment has no prima facie effect in any subsequent private lawsuit that may be brought against Nexstar.

#### V. Procedures Available for Modification of the Proposed Final Judgments

The United States and Nexstar have stipulated that the Court may enter the proposed Final Judgment after compliance with the provisions of the APPA, provided that the United States has not withdrawn its consent. The APPA conditions entry upon the Court's determination that the proposed Final Judgment is in the public interest.

The APPA provides a period of at least sixty days preceding the effective date of the proposed Final Judgment within which any person may submit to the United States written comments regarding the proposed Final Judgment. Any person who wishes to comment should do so within sixty days of the date of publication of this Competitive Impact Statement in the **Federal Register**, or the last date of publication in a newspaper of the summary of this Competitive Impact Statement, whichever is later. All comments received during this period will be considered by the United States Department of Justice, which remains free to withdraw its consent to the proposed Final Judgment at any time before the Court's entry of judgment. The comments and the response of the United States will be filed with the Court. In addition, comments will be posted on the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division's website and, under certain circumstances, published in the **Federal Register**.

Written comments should be submitted to: Owen M. Kendler, Chief, Media, Entertainment, & Professional Services Section, Antitrust Division, United States Department of Justice, 450 5th Street NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20530

Under Section IX, the proposed Final Judgment provides that the Court retains jurisdiction over this action, and the parties may apply to the Court for any order necessary or appropriate for the modification, interpretation, or enforcement of the Final Judgment.

#### VI. Alternatives to the Proposed Final Judgment

The United States considered, as an alternative to the proposed Final Judgment, seeking injunctive relief against Nexstar's conduct through a full trial on the merits. The United States is satisfied, however, that the relief sought in the proposed Final Judgment will terminate the anticompetitive conduct alleged in the Complaint and more quickly restore the benefits of competition to advertisers. Thus, the proposed Final Judgment would achieve the relief the United States might have obtained through litigation, but avoids the time, expense, and uncertainty of a full trial on the merits.

#### VII. Standard of Review Under the APPA for the Proposed Final Judgments

The Clayton Act, as amended by the APPA, requires that proposed consent judgments in

antitrust cases brought by the United States be subject to a 60-day comment period, after which the court shall determine whether entry of the proposed Final Judgment "is in the public interest." 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1). In making that determination, the court, in accordance with the statute as amended in 2004, is required to consider:

(A) the competitive impact of such judgment, including termination of alleged violations, provisions for enforcement and modification, duration of relief sought, anticipated effects of alternative remedies actually considered, whether its terms are ambiguous, and any other competitive considerations bearing upon the adequacy of such judgment that the court deems necessary to a determination of whether the consent judgment is in the public interest; and

(B) the impact of entry of such judgment upon competition in the relevant market or markets, upon the public generally and individuals alleging specific injury from the violations set forth in the complaint including consideration of the public benefit, if any, to be derived from a determination of the issues at trial.

15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1)(A) & (B). In considering these statutory factors, the court's inquiry is necessarily a limited one as the government is entitled to "broad discretion to settle with the defendant within the reaches of the public interest." *United States v. Microsoft Corp.*, 56 F.3d 1448, 1461 (D.C. Cir. 1995); *see generally United States v. SBC Commc'ns, Inc.*, 489 F. Supp. 2d 1 (D.D.C. 2007) (assessing public interest standard under the Tunney Act); *United States v. U.S. Airways Group, Inc.*, 38 F. Supp. 3d 69, 75 (D.D.C. 2014) (explaining that the "court's inquiry is limited" in Tunney Act settlements); *United States v. InBev N.V./S.A.*, No. 08-1965 (JR), 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84787, at \*3 (D.D.C. Aug. 11, 2009) (noting that the court's review of a consent judgment is limited and only inquires "into whether the government's determination that the proposed remedies will cure the antitrust violations alleged in the complaint was reasonable, and whether the mechanism to enforce the final judgment are clear and manageable").

As the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has held, under the APPA a court considers, among other things, the relationship between the remedy secured and the specific allegations in the government's complaint, whether the decree is sufficiently clear, whether its enforcement mechanisms are sufficient, and whether the decree may positively harm third parties. *See Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1458-62. With respect to the adequacy of the relief secured by the decree, a court may not "engage in an unrestricted evaluation of what relief would best serve the public." *United States v. BNS, Inc.*, 858 F.2d 456, 462 (9th Cir. 1988) (quoting *United States v. Bechtel Corp.*, 648 F.2d 660, 666 (9th Cir. 1981)); *see also Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1460-62; *United States v. Alcoa, Inc.*, 152 F. Supp. 2d 37, 40 (D.D.C. 2001); *InBev*, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84787, at \*3. Instead:

[t]he balancing of competing social and political interests affected by a proposed antitrust consent decree must be left, in the

first instance, to the discretion of the Attorney General. The court's role in protecting the public interest is one of insuring that the government has not breached its duty to the public in consenting to the decree. The court is required to determine not whether a particular decree is the one that will best serve society, but whether the settlement is "within the reaches of the public interest." More elaborate requirements might undermine the effectiveness of antitrust enforcement by consent decree.

*Bechtel*, 648 F.2d at 666 (emphasis added) (citations omitted).<sup>4</sup>

In determining whether a proposed settlement is in the public interest, a district court "must accord deference to the government's predictions about the efficacy of its remedies, and may not require that the remedies perfectly match the alleged violations." *SBC Commc'ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 17; *see also U.S. Airways*, 38 F. Supp. 3d at 74-75 (noting that a court should not reject the proposed remedies because it believes others are preferable and that room must be made for the government to grant concessions in the negotiation process for settlements); *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1461 (noting the need for courts to be "deferential to the government's predictions as to the effect of the proposed remedies"); *United States v. Archer-Daniels-Midland Co.*, 272 F. Supp. 2d 1, 6 (D.D.C. 2003) (noting that the court should grant "due respect to the government's prediction as to the effect of proposed remedies, its perception of the market structure, and its views of the nature of the case"). The ultimate question is whether "the remedies [obtained in the decree are] so inconsonant with the allegations charged as to fall outside of the 'reaches of the public interest.'" *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1461 (quoting *United States v. Western Elec. Co.*, 900 F.2d 283, 309 (D.C. Cir. 1990)). To meet this standard, the United States "need only provide a factual basis for concluding that the settlements are reasonably adequate remedies for the alleged harms." *SBC Commc'ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 17.

Moreover, the court's role under the APPA is limited to reviewing the remedy in relationship to the violations that the United States has alleged in its complaint, and does not authorize the court to "construct [its] own hypothetical case and then evaluate the decree against that case." *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1459; *see also U.S. Airways*, 38 F. Supp. 3d at 75 (noting that the court must simply determine whether there is a factual foundation for the government's decisions such that its conclusions regarding the proposed settlements are reasonable); *InBev*, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84787, at \*20 ("the 'public interest' is not to be measured by comparing the violations alleged in the complaint against those the court believes

<sup>4</sup> *See also BNS*, 858 F.2d at 464 (holding that the court's "ultimate authority under the [APPA] is limited to approving or disapproving the consent decree"); *United States v. Gillette Co.*, 406 F. Supp. 713, 716 (D. Mass. 1975) (noting that, in this way, the court is constrained to "look at the overall picture not hypercritically, nor with a microscope, but with an artist's reducing glass").

could have, or even should have, been alleged"). Because the "court's authority to review the decree depends entirely on the government's exercising its prosecutorial discretion by bringing a case in the first place," it follows that "the court is only authorized to review the decree itself," and not to "effectively redraft the complaint" to inquire into other matters that the United States did not pursue. *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1459–60.

In its 2004 amendments,<sup>5</sup> Congress made clear its intent to preserve the practical benefits of utilizing consent decrees in antitrust enforcement, adding the unambiguous instruction that "[n]othing in this section shall be construed to require the court to conduct an evidentiary hearing or to require the court to permit anyone to intervene." 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(2); *see also U.S. Airways*, 38 F. Supp. 3d at 76 (indicating that a court is not required to hold an evidentiary hearing or to permit intervenors as part of its review under the Tunney Act). This language explicitly wrote into the statute what Congress intended when it first enacted the Tunney Act in 1974. As Senator Tunney explained: "[t]he court is nowhere compelled to go to trial or to engage in extended proceedings which might have the effect of vitiating the benefits of prompt and less costly settlement through the consent decree process." 119 Cong. Rec. 24,598 (1973) (statement of Sen. Tunney). Rather, the procedure for the public interest determination is left to the discretion of the court, with the recognition that the court's "scope of review remains sharply proscribed by precedent and the nature of Tunney Act proceedings." *SBC Commc'ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 11. A court can make its public interest determination based on the competitive impact statement and response to public comments alone. *U.S. Airways*, 38 F. Supp. 3d at 76. *See also United States v. Enova Corp.*, 107 F. Supp. 2d 10, 17 (D.D.C. 2000) (noting that the "Tunney Act expressly allows the court to make its public interest determination on the basis of the competitive impact statement and response to comments alone"); S. Rep. No. 93–298 93d Cong., 1st Sess., at 6 (1973) ("Where the public interest can be meaningfully evaluated simply on the basis of briefs and oral arguments, that is the approach that should be utilized.").

#### VIII. Determinative Documents

There are no determinative materials or documents within the meaning of the APPA that were considered by the United States in formulating the proposed Final Judgment.

Dated: December 13, 2018

Respectfully submitted,

Lee F. Berger \* (D.C. Bar #482435),  
Trial Attorney.

<sup>5</sup> The 2004 amendments substituted "shall" for "may" in directing relevant factors for a court to consider and amended the list of factors to focus on competitive considerations and to address potentially ambiguous judgment terms. *Compare* 15 U.S.C. § 16(e) (2004), with 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1) (2006); *see also SBC Commc'ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 11 (concluding that the 2004 amendments "effected minimal changes" to Tunney Act review).

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## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

### Antitrust Division

#### United States v. Gray Television, Inc., et al.; Proposed Final Judgment and Competitive Impact Statement

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C. 16(b)–(h), that a proposed Final Judgment, Stipulation, and Competitive Impact Statement have been filed with the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in *United States of America v. Gray Television, Inc., et al.*, Civil Action No. 1:18–cv–2951 (CRC). On December 14, 2018, the United States filed a Complaint alleging that the proposed merger between Gray Television, Inc., and Raycom Media, Inc., would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. 18. The proposed Final Judgment, filed at the same time as the Complaint, requires Gray and Raycom to divest certain broadcast television stations in Waco-Temple-Bryan, Texas; Tallahassee, Florida-Thomasville, Georgia; Toledo, Ohio; Odessa-Midland, Texas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Augusta, Georgia; Panama City, Florida; Dothan, Alabama; and Albany, Georgia.

Copies of the Complaint, proposed Final Judgment, and Competitive Impact Statement are available for inspection on the Antitrust Division's website at <https://www.justice.gov/atr> and at the Office of the Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Copies of these materials may be obtained from the Antitrust Division upon request and payment of the copying fee set by Department of Justice regulations.

Public comment is invited within sixty (60) days of the date of this notice. Such comments, including the name of the submitter, and responses thereto, will be posted on the Antitrust Division's website, filed with the Court, and, under certain circumstances, published in the **Federal Register**. Comments should be directed to Owen Kendler, Chief, Media, Entertainment, and Professional Services Section, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 450 Fifth Street NW, Suite 4000,

Washington, DC 20530 (telephone: 202–305–8376).

Patricia A. Brink,  
Director of Civil Enforcement.

#### United States District Court for the District of Columbia

*United States of America*, 450 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC 20530. Plaintiff, v. *GRAY TELEVISION, INC.* 4370 Peachtree Road NE Atlanta, Georgia 30319; and *RAYCOM MEDIA, INC.* RSA Tower 20th Floor 201 Monroe Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104 Defendants.

Case No. 1:18–cv–2951  
Judge Christopher R. Cooper

#### COMPLAINT

The United States of America, acting under the direction of the Acting Attorney General of the United States, brings this civil action against Gray Television, Inc. ("Gray") and Raycom Media, Inc. ("Raycom") to enjoin Gray's proposed merger with Raycom. The United States complains and alleges as follows:

#### I. NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. Pursuant to an Agreement and Plan of Merger dated June 23, 2018, Gray plans to acquire Raycom through a merger transaction for approximately \$3.6 billion in cash and stock.

2. The proposed merger would combine two of the largest independent local television station owners in the United States and would combine many popular local television stations that compete against each other today in several markets, likely resulting in significant harm to competition.

3. In nine Designated Market Areas ("DMAs"), Gray and Raycom each own at least one broadcast television station that is an affiliate of one of the "Big 4" television networks: NBC, CBS, ABC, or FOX.

4. These nine "Overlap DMAs" are: (i) Waco-Temple-Bryan, Texas; (ii) Tallahassee, Florida-Thomasville, Georgia; (iii) Toledo, Ohio; (iv) Odessa-Midland, Texas; (v) Knoxville, Tennessee; (vi) Augusta, Georgia; (vii) Panama City, Florida; (viii) Dothan, Alabama; and (ix) Albany, Georgia.

5. In each Overlap DMA, the proposed merger would eliminate competition between Gray and Raycom in (i) the licensing of Big 4 network content ("retransmission consent") to cable, satellite, and fiber optic television providers (referred to collectively as multichannel video programming distributors, or "MVPDs"), for distribution to their subscribers; and (ii) the sale of spot advertising to advertisers interested in reaching viewers in the DMA.

6. By eliminating a major competitor, the merger would likely give Gray the power to charge MVPDs higher fees for its programming—fees that those companies would likely pass on, in large measure, to their subscribers. Additionally, the merger would likely allow Gray to charge local businesses and other advertisers higher prices to reach audiences in the Overlap DMAs.

7. As a result, the proposed merger of Gray and Raycom likely would substantially