

To the Editor,

Recently, at least three non-local radio stations in the Clear Channel network were found to have encouraged harassment of bicyclists, suggesting listeners throw bottles at them, try to hit them with side-view mirrors, honk loudly while alongside a cyclist, slam on their brakes in front of them, and others. This issue has received scant attention in the media, much to the danger of those of us who regularly brave America's highways on our bicycles. One can only wonder about Clear Channel's motives for endangering so many of their fellow Americans, particularly at this time of "united we stand."

For those unfamiliar with Clear Channel, it owns over 1200 radio stations, the largest number in the US. In the past, it has committed flagrant violations of its mandate to operate in the public interest, even going so far as to organize pro-war demonstrations and subsequently report them as news. This manufacturing of news, while egregious and underhanded, did not have as much potential to cause direct harm as does its latest actions against cyclists.

There is currently a grassroots effort underway to fight back against this kind of needless -- and rather puzzling -- endangering of fellow citizens, all of whom are merely exercising their legal right to use the public rights-of-way. Clear Channel has "clearly" violated FCC regulations governing its use of the public's airwaves; the airwaves belong to us, and FCC regulations stipulate they be used in the public interest. It is unclear what public interest is served by encouraging potentially lethal attacks against bicyclists.

If this issue concerns you, please contact the FCC or your elected officials immediately to complain about Clear Channel's reckless and illegal behavior, and to insist that punitive actions be taken against this dangerous trend.

The FCC has set up a task force handling this issue, which can be reached at www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs -- mention file number RM-10803. Concerned citizens can also contact FCC chairman Michael Powell at mpowell@fcc.gov, or the following FCC commissioners: Kathleen Q. Abernathy, kabernat@fcc.gov; Michael Copps, mcopps@fcc.gov; or Kevin Martin, kjmweb@fcc.gov. For more information about this issue, please visit www.clearchannelcriticalmass.com.

Thank you.
David Martelli