



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 12, 2000

REMINDER TO SMALL BUSINESSES: SBA'S OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH FEDERAL ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

Washington, DC -- The FCC wishes to remind small entities that the Office of the National Ombudsman, within the U.S. Small Business Administration, is available to assist small entities with federal agency enforcement and compliance matters. Created by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA),¹ the Ombudsman's Office and ten regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards ("RegFair Boards") facilitate meaningful dialogue between the agencies and small entities.

One avenue for assistance is the Ombudsman's written comment procedure. Using a one-page Federal Agency Appraisal Form, a small business may submit to the Ombudsman's Office any complaints, suggestions, or compliments concerning a federal agency's enforcement action. The Ombudsman then forwards this form, along with any additional documentation, to the agency for review. You may obtain additional information on this process, as well as on the RegFair hearing process, by contacting the Ombudsman's Office at the numbers given below.

The FCC also notes that small businesses may request expedited treatment of an enforcement action against them where they believe that delay may threaten the economic viability of the business.

Last, the Ombudsman's Office has asked all agencies to make clear that, if a small entity requests Ombudsman assistance on a matter, the agency will not retaliate in response. The FCC is pleased to make this point clear, as we welcome the sort of constructive comment that can result from coordination among the FCC, the Ombudsman's Office, and small entities.

For further information concerning the written comment procedure for small businesses, contact Eric Malinen of the Office of Communications Business Opportunities, (202) 418-0995, emalinen@fcc.gov. For information on expediting the treatment of a specific small business enforcement matter, contact Suzanne M. Tetreault of the Enforcement Bureau, (202) 418-1769, stetreau@fcc.gov.

To contact the SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman: toll free, (888)-REG-FAIR (888-734-3247); regfair@sba.gov; www.sba.gov/regfair.

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¹ See 15 U.S.C. § 657. SBREFA is Title II of the Contract With America Advancement Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-121, 110 Stat. 847 (1996), which amended the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. § 601 *et seq.*