



PRESS RELEASE

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RADIO INDUSTRY WELCOMES PASSING OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY ACT

Representatives of all sectors of the radio industry have today welcomed the Digital Economy Act's successful passage through Parliament. The Act, which includes six sections on radio, will allow set manufacturers, the motor industry and the radio industry to plan confidently for a digital future.

The radio sections, which enable the consumer-led transition to digital-only transmission for national and larger local services, while creating space on the FM spectrum for small local and community stations, were supported by all sectors of the radio industry, including the BBC, Commercial Radio, the Community Media Association and the Student Radio Association.

The passing of the Bill echoes the support given to digital radio by two recent Select Committee Reports (the House of Lords Communications Committee and the Commons CMS Select Committee).

Ford Ennals, Chief Executive of Digital Radio UK, said:

"We welcome the clear policy direction and legislative framework that is now in place giving us a foundation upon which to build a secure and prosperous future for radio and significant benefits for listeners. The switch to digital radio will also deliver opportunities for growth and greater competition within the industry as more commercial stations gain the ability to transmit nationally, and community and small local radio stations gain greater access to FM."

Mark Friend, Controller, Multiplatform & Interactive, BBC Audio & Music, said:

"Passing the Digital Economy Act into law is an important milestone in securing radio's place in a multi-platform digital world. It sets the stage for broadcasters and manufacturers to deliver the benefits of digital to UK radio listeners, including increased choice, quality and functionality."

Paul Eaton, Director of Radio at Arqiva, said:

"Through granting us the ability to re-plan multiplexes, the Digital Economy Act will enable us to expand and enhance the digital signal to deliver the benefits of digital radio to the whole population."

Andrew Harrison, Chief Executive, RadioCentre, said:

“The Digital Economy Act brings much needed deregulation for local Commercial Radio, and creates a framework that will benefit all sectors of the radio industry, and stations of all types and sizes, allowing radio to remain relevant to consumers and fully competitive in a digital environment.”

ENDS

About the radio sections of the Digital Economy Act

Section 29 – allows a date for switchover to be set (Government has said this will only happen when agreed coverage and listening criteria have been met).

Sections 30 and 31 – grant licence renewals to local and national analogue stations also broadcasting on digital to facilitate investment in digital radio

Section 32 – gives Government the power to withdraw those renewals

Section 33 – gives greater operational freedom for local Commercial Radio stations

Section 34 – gives Ofcom the flexibility to re-plan local multiplex licences and extend the coverage area of Digital One, the national commercial multiplex

Section 35 –allows a new piece of (secondary) legislation to be brought forward to extend multiplex licences.

About Digital Radio UK

Digital Radio UK is the company tasked with establishing digital as the leading radio format in the UK and ensuring its wide availability and continuing take up among the UK's 46 million radio listeners.

Funded and supported by Commercial Radio, the BBC and Arqiva, Digital Radio UK is the central industry communicator on digital radio, working closely with all parties with an interest in digital radio, from broadcasters and the car industry to manufacturers and retailers, to deliver the consumer and economic benefits of digital radio upgrade, which include more station choice, better sound quality and greater functionality for radio listeners.

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