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Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In re Applications of	)	MM Docket No. 97-77
	)	
	)	
GREATER WASHINGTON EDUCATION	)	File No. BPED-930617MD
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	)	
ASSOCIATION, INC.	)	
(Hereafter "GWETA")	)	
Leonardtown, Maryland	)	
Req: 91.7 MHz, Channel 219B	)	
50 kW (H&V); 89 meters	)	
	)	
For Construction Permit for a New	)	
Noncommercial Educational	)	
FM Station	)	
	)	
COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE	)	File No. BPED-930723MB
BROADCASTING, INC.	)	
(Hereafter "Columbia")	)	
Takoma Park, Maryland	)	
Has: 91.9 MHz, Channel 220B	)	
29.5 kW (H); 50 meters	)	
Req: 91.9 MHz, Channel 220B	)	
25 kW (H&V); 150 meters	)	
	)	
For Modification of Facilities of	)	
Station WGTS-FM	)	
Takoma Park, Maryland	)	

**HEARING DESIGNATION ORDER**

**Adopted: February 13, 1997**

**Released: February 24, 1997**

**By the Chief, Audio Services Division:**

1. The Commission has before it the above-captioned mutually exclusive applications for construction permit for a new, noncommercial educational FM station in Leonardtown, Maryland

and Columbia's mutually exclusive application to modify the facilities of Station WGTS-FM Takoma Park, Maryland. The mutually exclusive proposals are presented for a Section 307(b) determination only, *i.e.*, for a comparison of the respective communities' needs for the proposed new service rather than on an evaluation of the applicants' comparative qualifications.<sup>1</sup>

2. GWETA's Main Studio Request. 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125(a) requires each broadcast station to maintain a main studio within the station's principal community contour to ensure that the station will serve the needs and interests of the residents of its community of license. Amendment of Sections 73.1125 and 73.1130, 3 FCC Rcd 5024, 5027 (1988). However, under Section 73.1125(a)(4), the Commission will waive this requirement where "good cause" exists to do so and where the proposed studio location "would be consistent with the operation of the station in the public interest." Each waiver request by an NCE station seeking to operate as the satellite of another NCE station is considered on a case-by-case basis. The Commission has recognized the benefits of centralized operations for NCE stations, given their limited funding, and thus found "good cause" exists to waive the main studio location requirement where satellite operations are proposed. *Id.* A satellite station must, however, demonstrate that it will meet its local service obligation to satisfy the Section 73.1125 "public interest" standard. *Id.*

3. GWETA seeks a waiver of 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125 for its proposed Leonardtown facility to operate as a satellite station of commonly owned station WETA-FM, Washington, D.C. GWETA has stated that the waiver is necessary for it to fulfill its mission to provide economical satellite public radio transmitter service to as wide an audience as possible given the realities of funding for public broadcasting. In order to ensure that local issues in

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<sup>1</sup> In its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in MM Docket No. 95-31, In the Matter of Reexamination of the Comparative Standards for New Noncommercial Educational Applicants, 10 FCC Rcd 2877 (March 17, 1995), the Commission announced that it was imposing a partial freeze on the processing of noncommercial educational-FM applications ("NCE-FM") until the Commission adopted new or revised NCE-FM comparative criteria. Further, the Commission indicated that it would no longer issue decisions in pending hearing proceedings involving competing applicants for NCE-FM broadcast facilities where those decisions would rely upon the existing comparative criteria for NCE-FM applicants. By Memorandum Opinion and Order in Santa Monica Community College District, 11 FCC Rcd 1123 (February 1, 1996), the Commission indicated that hearings for consideration of mutually exclusive NCE-FM proposals could proceed where consideration of the competing applications under the provisions of Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. § 307(b), would prove dispositive.

Leonardtwn will be met, GWETA has agreed to undertake the following:

- (a) To regularly ascertain the unique interests of Leonardtown through contact with community leaders;
- (b) To maintain the Leonardtown facility's ability to be separately programmed from the Washington D.C. studio. In this manner, GWETA will be able to provide announcements of local events, weather and emergency services to the residents of Leonardtown;
- (c) To include Leonardtown in the extensive cultural events coverage of WETA-FM;
- (d) To seek to expand its governing board to include representatives from the Leonardtown area;
- (e) To establish a toll-free number from Leonardtown to the proposed station's main studio in Washington, D.C.; and
- (f) To maintain a local public inspection file in its community of license, as required by Commission rules.

4. GWETA's request is essentially based on the economies of scale which would be realized by grant of its waiver. We conclude that there is "good cause" to waive 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125(a)(4) in these circumstances. Furthermore, we concur that GWETA's proposals will ensure that the needs and interests of Leonardtown, Maryland are served. Accordingly, in the event that a construction permit is awarded to GWETA as a result of this proceeding, we will waive the provisions of 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125(a)(4) to the extent indicated herein.

5. GWETA's Financial Qualifications. As originally filed, GWETA's application was financially dependent on a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ("NTIA"). GWETA has not informed the Commission that it received the requested grant and information received from NTIA indicates that GWETA has not reapplied for a grant during the current grant cycle. Accordingly, GWETA will be required to provide an amendment to the presiding Administrative Law Judge concerning the status of its request for funding from NTIA as well as any alternative sources of funding available.

6. Potential Share-Time Arrangement. Neither one of the applicants has indicated that an attempt has been made to negotiate a share-time arrangement. Therefore, an issue will be specified to determine whether a share-time arrangement between the applicants would be the most effective use of the frequency, and thus better serve the public interest. Granfalloon Denver Educational Broadcasting, Inc., 43 Fed. Reg. 49,560, published October 24, 1978. In the event that this issue is resolved in the affirmative, an issue will also be specified to determine the nature of such an arrangement. It should be noted that our action specifying a time-sharing issue is not intended to preclude the applicants, either before the commencement of the hearing or at

any time during the course of the hearing, from participating in negotiations with a view toward establishing a share-time arrangement.

7. Section 307(b) Issue. The respective proposals are for different communities and would serve different areas. Thus one proposal may receive a decisive preference based on the comparative need for the proposed new services. Consequently, it will be necessary to determine pursuant to Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, which of the proposals would best provide a fair, efficient and equitable distribution of radio services.

8. Except as may be indicated by any issues specified below, the applicants are qualified to construct and operate as proposed. Since the proposals are mutually exclusive, they must be designated for hearing in a consolidated proceeding on the issues specified below.

9. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, That, pursuant to Section 309(e) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, the applications ARE DESIGNATED FOR HEARING IN A CONSOLIDATED PROCEEDING, at a time and place to be specified in a subsequent Order, upon the following issues:

1. To determine: (a) the number of other reserved channel noncommercial educational FM services available in the proposed service area of each applicant, and the area and population served thereby; (b) whether a share-time arrangement between the applicants would result in the most effective use of the channel and thus better serve the public interest and, if so, the terms and conditions thereof; and (c) in light of Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, which of the proposals would best provide a fair, efficient and equitable distribution of radio service.
2. To determine, in light of the evidence adduced pursuant to the specified issues, which of the applications should be granted, if either.

10. If, in view of the foregoing, no determination can be made as to which of the proposals would best provide a fair, efficient and equitable distribution of radio services pursuant to Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, then the proceeding shall be held in abeyance until such time as the Commission shall have adopted new or revised NCE-FM comparative criteria, in accordance with its NPRM in Reexamination of the Comparative Standards for New Noncommercial Educational Applicants, MM Docket 95-31, 10 FCC Rcd 2877, 2879 (March 17, 1995).

11. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That in the event a construction permit is awarded to GWETA, the provisions of 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125 ARE WAIVED to permit its proposed Leonardtown station to operate as a satellite station of WETA-FM, Washington, D.C.

12. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that GWETA must amend its proposal to specify the status of funding available from NTIA or alternative sources of funding available to the applicant.

13. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That a copy of each document filed in this proceeding subsequent to the day of adoption of this Order shall be served on the counsel of record in the Hearing Branch appearing on behalf of the Chief, Mass Media Bureau. Parties may inquire as to the identity of the counsel of record by calling the Hearing Branch at (202) 418-1430. Such service shall be addressed to the named counsel of record, Hearing Branch, Enforcement Division, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 2025 M Street, N.W., Suite 7212, Washington, D.C. 20554. Additionally, a copy of each amendment filed in this proceeding subsequent to the date of adoption of this Order shall be served on the Chief, Data Management Staff, Audio Services Division, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, Room 350, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

14. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That, to avail themselves of the opportunity to be heard, the applicants and any party respondent herein shall, pursuant to Section 1.221(c) of the Commission's Rules, in person or by attorney within 20 days of the mailing of this Order, file with the Commission, in triplicate, a written appearance stating an intention to appear on the date fixed for hearing and to present evidence on the issues specified in this Order.

15. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, That the applicants herein shall, pursuant to Section 311(a)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Section 73.3594 of the Commission's Rules, give notice of the hearing within the time and in the manner prescribed in such Rule, and shall advise the Commission of the publication of such notice as required by Section 73.3594(g) of the Rules.

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

Linda Blair, Chief  
Audio Services Division  
Mass Media Bureau