

PEPPER & CORAZZINI

L. L. P.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

1776 K STREET, N.W., SUITE 200

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

(202) 296-0600

VINCENT A. PEPPER  
ROBERT F. CORAZZINI  
PETER GUTMANN  
JOHN F. GARZIGLIA  
ELLEN S. MANDELL  
HOWARD J. BARR  
MICHAEL J. LEHMKUHL \*  
SUZANNE C. SPINK \*  
MICHAEL H. SHACTER  
PATRICIA M. CHUH  
LEE G. PETRO \*

\* NOT ADMITTED IN D.C.

GREGG P. SKALL  
E. THEODORE MALLYCK  
OF COUNSEL

FREDERICK W. FORD  
1909-1986

TELECOPIER (202) 296-5572

INTERNET PEPCOR@COMMLAW.COM

WEB SITE HTTP://WWW.COMMLAW.COM

December 28, 1998

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: **Petition for Reconsideration & Clarification of  
Report and Order  
MM Docket No. 97-217  
File No. RM-9060**

Dear Ms. Salas:

Transmitted herewith on behalf of UT Television, is an original and five (5) copies of its Petition for Reconsideration & Clarification of Report and Order in MM Docket No. 97-217. Pursuant to the attached certificate of service, a copy of these Comments have also been hand delivered to the Chairman and each Commissioner. Should there be any questions concerning this material, please communicate directly with the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

  
Robert F. Corazzini  
Counsel

Enclosure

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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Amendment of Parts 1, 21 and 74 to Enable	)	MM Docket No. 97-217
Multipoint Distribution Service	)	
And Instructional Television Fixed	)	File No. RM-9060
Service Licensees to Engage in Fixed	)	
Two-Way Transmissions	)	

**PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION AND CLARIFICATION  
OF REPORT AND ORDER**

Comes now UT Television ("UT/TV") by the undersigned counsel and presents its request for clarification and reconsideration by the Federal Communications Commission of the above-captioned Report and Order. On September 25, 1998, the Commission released a Report and Order in this docket, Amendments of Parts 1, 21 and 74 to Enable Multipoint Distribution Service and Instructional Television Fixed Service Licensees to Engage in Fixed Two-Way Transmissions, FCC 98-231 (rel. September 25, 1998) (hereinafter "Two-Way Order"). This Two-Way Order appeared in the Federal Register on November 25, 1998, providing a 30-day petition for reconsideration period that terminates on December 28, 1998. UT/TV presents the following requests for clarification and reconsideration regarding the Two-Way Order:

**I. Channel Swapping and Shifting**

1. The Commission should amend Sections 21.901(d) and 74.902(f) of its rules to allow any ITFS licensee to swap channels with any ITFS or MDS licensee

regardless of whether one of the licensees utilizes digital technology or leases to a lessee that utilizes digital technology. There is no discernable rationale as to why channel swaps should be limited to only those channels associated with digital emissions. Analog operations would equally benefit from having the flexibility to swap channels. Therefore, the Commission should allow channel swaps between all MDS and ITFS channels regardless of whether digital transmissions are employed in the market.

2. Likewise, the Commission should allow ITFS licensees to channel shift regardless of whether digital transmissions are being employed by the ITFS licensee or the operator to whom it leases its excess capacity.<sup>1/</sup> It is illogical to apply one set of rules to an analog system and a second set to a digital system where there is no technical basis to differentiate between the two. An analog ITFS licensee and wireless cable operator should have the same flexibility as a digital operator to shift the ITFS programming of an ITFS licensee onto another MDS or ITFS channel in its system. The Commission should permit the greatest flexibility to ITFS and MDS licensees in order to allow them to be guided by service demand rather than by administrative restraints. This includes the ability to channel shift despite operating in an analog mode.

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<sup>1/</sup> While the Two-Way Order would permit an ITFS licensee to channel shift if it is leasing its excess capacity to a wireless cable operator which utilizes digital transmissions, revised Section 74.931(d) only permits channel shifting to other MDS or ITFS channels if the ITFS licensee itself is operating digitally. Two-Way Order at ¶ 101.

## **II. ITFS Major Change Applications**

3. The Commission should allow the filing of any ITFS major change application, even those unrelated to two-way proposals, during the initial one-week filing window. While Section 74.911(e) of the Commission's rules specifically states that the one-week window shall be opened for the filing of "high-power signal booster station, response station hub, and I channels point-to-multipoint transmissions licenses," nothing prevents the Commission from simultaneously opening an ITFS window for major modification applications that are not directly related to two-way transmissions. 47 U.S.C. § 74.911(c) (1995). Such a window can be essential to the development of ITFS facilities in markets of existing wireless cable systems utilizing ITFS excess capacity from licensees that have not had the opportunity to modify since December, 1996.<sup>2/</sup> Further, any such ITFS licensee that had planned to file a modification application in the next ITFS filing window will indirectly affect or be affected by the two-way initial one-week window. Conducting both filing windows simultaneously would relieve the Commission's dilemma of whether to conduct an ITFS window prior to the two-way initial one-week window, which would render two-way systems more difficult to engineer, or following the two-way window, which will result in making ITFS downstream modifications more burdensome to prepare and which would preclude protection to receive sites requested as part of those modifications. By accepting both types of applications concurrently, all

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<sup>2/</sup> See Public Notice, DA 96-1724 (released October 17, 1996) ("Mass Media Announces Commencement of Sixty (60) Day Period for Filing ITFS Modifications and Amendments Seeking to Co-Locate Facilities with Wireless Cable Operators").

applicants will be similarly situated in that they all will be subject to resolving interference concerns together during the sixty day window following the tendering of filing of such applications, rather than placing the burden on one particular group of applicants. To conduct separate filing windows would be to unjustly favor one group of applicants over another, for which there is no rational basis.

4. Any ITFS major modification applications submitted during the initial one-week window or any rolling one-day filing window that cause mutual interference need not be considered as mutually exclusive and therefore, subject to auction. Pursuant to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which expanded the Commission's auction authority under Section 309(j) of the Communications Act, the Commission shall grant a license or permit to "a qualified applicant through a system of competitive bidding...[i]f... mutually exclusive applications are accepted for any initial license or construction permit." Balanced Budget Act of 1997, § 3002(a)(1), *codified as* 47 U.S.C. § 309(j) [emphasis added]. However, the Commission is not mandated by the terms of Section 309(j) to auction mutually exclusive modification applications. See In the Matter of Implementation of Section 309(j) of the Communications Act -- Competitive Bidding for Commercial Broadcast and Instructional Television Fixed Service Licenses, MM Docket No. 97-234, at ¶ 14 (rel. August 18, 1998) (the "Auction Order"). While the Commission states that it "may be appropriate in some cases to treat a major modification as an initial application for competitive bidding purposes," that determination is subject to the Commission's discretion, and by its own admission, the Commission concedes that its

conclusion is only due to "the absence of another viable method for resolving instances of mutual exclusivity in a timely and efficient manner." Id. at ¶ 16.

5. The two-way rules present a solution to this predicament. According to the Two-Way Order, the Commission has deemed that "applications filed on the same day will not be treated as mutually exclusive by the Commission and that it will be the responsibility of the parties to resolve any conflicts." Two-Way Order at ¶ 65. Certainly, the FCC has the authority to determine that any ITFS major modification applications filed in the two-way initial window which interfere with each other will not be considered mutually exclusive but that conflicts are to be resolved through the efforts of the applicants.<sup>3/</sup> By processing ITFS modification applications in accordance with the processing rules for two-way applications, the Commission promotes rapid deployment of service to the public by removing the processing delays which are currently experienced by the October, 1995 applications. Therefore, the Commission should clarify that ITFS modifications submitted during the initial one week or any rolling one-day filing window will be subject to the two-way rules and not be subject to auction.

#### IV. Conclusion

6. In summary, UT/TV believes that only through the most flexible framework possible utilizing the least regulatory scheme necessary will both the distance education

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<sup>3/</sup> The Commission considers the threat of having to immediately cease operations in event of interference to another party as sufficient motivation for applicants to resolve potential problems. Two-Way Order at ¶ 70.

providers and the wireless cable system operators realize the maximum benefits of the era of new technology in which both must fully participate in order to recognize their distinct, yet obviously compatible, goals. ITFS and wireless cable operators should be free to structure their stations and system in a way that meets their respective needs as solely determined by the parties.

Respectfully submitted,

**UT Television**

By

  
Robert F. Corazzini  
Suzanne Spink Goodwyn  
Counsel

**PEPPER & CORAZZINI, L.L.P.**  
1776 K Street, N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 296-0600  
December 28, 1998

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Robert F. Corazzini, on behalf of UT Television, certify that a copy of the foregoing Comments in Proposed Rulemaking were delivered by hand to the following on December 28, 1998:

Chairman William E. Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Room 802  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Gloria Tristani  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Room 826  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Michael K. Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Room 844  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Commissioner Susan Ness  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Room 832  
Washington, D.C. 20554

  
Robert F. Corazzini