

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

In the Matter of)
)
Creation of a Low Power Radio Service) MM Docket No. 99-25
)
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To the Commission:

Fort Collins Youth Broadcasting (“FCYB”) is a student-founded organization consisting of high school students and adult mentors and supervisors. Currently, FCYB has no ownership or interest in any broadcast stations¹, and has no hope of acquiring a full-service station due to a small budget, and cannot acquire an LPFM license as the rules are now.

Under these circumstances, there are definitely certain aspects of the Low Power Radio Service that the Commission could change that would permit FCYB to apply for, and receive, a construction permit for a Low Power Radio station.

To begin, we agree with most of the Commission’s tentative decisions with regards to the licensing of Low Power stations using contour-based methodology. We believe that it is fair that the new station would be required to resolve any interference issues. We also agree that alternative propagation methods (Longely-Rice, etc.) should be not used as valid demonstrations for interference, as the contour-based standards are well-established and simple to use.

We believe that it is appropriate to license stations to community organizations under such contour-based standards. There is no reason to believe that community organizations will respond slower to interference complaints than any other type of radio licensee. In addition, we do not feel the Commission should make assumptions about the technical experience or resources about an organization, and as such should give all organizations an equal chance at a radio license.

Comments were requested on whether it would be appropriate to require the use of a consulting engineer for a Low Power Radio application. We believe this would be very inappropriate, as contour protection is not a complicated subject matter, and is easily “self-taught.” Furthermore, LPFM advocacy organizations like Prometheus Radio Project could setup workshops and tutorials on how to create the maps needed to prove that a station would meet contour requirements.

The Commission requested specific comments with regards to the issue of “co-equal” status between LPFM stations and translators. We’d like to comment on some of these issues.

¹ FCYB did file for a full service non-commercial/educational station in the previous October window, but is being dismissed as per a settlement agreement with a mutually exclusive applicant.

To begin, we do not believe that translators should be distinguished based on their delivery method. For instance, a non-commercial station owned by a local organization may be translated into a mountain area that is close by. The station may choose to use a satellite to get the audio from the studio to the translator, simply because there is no way to receive the signal otherwise. Based on this example, there are legitimate reasons for a local broadcaster to use satellite to get to “hard-to-reach” places translated. However, we believe that translator use for extending the signal nationwide is a serious abuse of process.

We do not believe that the Commission should bother with the concern of “listening patterns.” Radio stations, especially commercial stations, change formats. While they may not do it often, stations *do* change formats. With this in mind, the replacement of a translator with an LPFM station would be similar to a format change. While listening audiences will need to adjust, they will eventually.

We fully agree with Prometheus’ definition of an “originating station.” A station here in Fort Collins, KLHV, is a full-service station that simply repeats Educational Media Foundation’s K-LOVE programming from California. With this in mind, we do not believe that KLHV (or any station like it) should have the privilege of being further translated, and we also agree with Prometheus’ cap of 25 translators per originating station. While we support the cap, unfortunately we have no constructive comments for the Commission on how to efficiently administer or enforce it.

We believe that the best course of action is for Low Power Radio applications to override pending translator applications. By simply giving the right-of-way to LPFM stations, new radio services can finally go on-air. If the debate between LPFM and translators goes on, eventually applications will become out-dated due to new stations, drop-in/one-step applications and other move-ins. It is our belief that Low Power Radio does more for the community due to its local presence than a translator does, and therefore deserves precedence.

Actions Requested in Summary

We request that the Commission permit the use of contour-based protection for Low Power Radio, and that priority be given to LPFM stations over translators.

Respectfully Submitted,
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