



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2006-84

Ottawa, 16 March 2006

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Edmonton, Alberta;
St-Boniface and Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Calgary, Alberta

*Applications 2005-0567-0, 2005-0565-4, 2005-0568-8,
2005-0564-6, 2005-0566-2, 2005-0569-6*

*Broadcasting Public Notices CRTC 2005-69 and 2005-84
21 July 2005 and 24 August 2005*

CBK Regina, CHFA and CBX Edmonton, CKSB St-Boniface and CBW Winnipeg, and CBR Calgary – Addition of FM transmitters

*The Commission **approves** applications to amend the broadcasting licence for CBK Regina in order to operate an FM transmitter in Saskatoon; to amend the broadcasting licences for CHFA and CBX Edmonton in order to operate FM transmitters in Edmonton; to amend the broadcastings licences for CKSB St-Boniface and CBW Winnipeg in order to operate FM transmitters in Winnipeg; and to amend the broadcasting licence for CBR Calgary in order to operate an FM transmitter in Calgary.*

The applications

1. The Commission received applications by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) to amend the broadcasting licence for the AM radio programming undertaking CBK Regina in order to operate an FM transmitter in Saskatoon; to amend the broadcasting licences for the AM radio programming undertakings CHFA and CBX Edmonton in order to operate FM transmitters in Edmonton; to amend the broadcasting licences for the AM radio programming undertakings CKSB St-Boniface and CBW Winnipeg in order to operate FM transmitters in Winnipeg; and to amend the broadcasting licence for the AM radio programming undertaking CBR Calgary in order to operate an FM transmitter in Calgary.
2. The CBC indicated that the proposed FM transmitters would operate with the following technical parameters:

Originating station	Location of transmitter	Frequency (channel)	Average effective radiated power
CBK Regina	Saskatoon	94.1 MHz (channel 231A)	4,100 watts

CHFA Edmonton	Edmonton	101.1 MHz (channel 266A)	3,931 watts
CBX Edmonton	Edmonton	93.9 MHz (channel 230A)	3,931 watts
CKSB St-Boniface	Winnipeg	90.5 MHz (channel 213A)	2,800 watts
CBW Winnipeg	Winnipeg	89.3 MHz (channel 207A)	2,800 watts
CBR Calgary	Calgary	99.1 MHz (channel 256B1L)	1,100 watts

3. The proposed transmitters of the English-language radio stations CBK Regina, CBX Edmonton, CBW Winnipeg, and CBR Calgary would rebroadcast the programming of the CBC's national, English-language network service Radio One. The proposed transmitters of the French-language radio stations CHFA Edmonton and CKSB St-Boniface would broadcast the programming of the CBC's national, French-language network service La Première chaîne.

CBC's rationale for the present applications

4. The CBC submitted that urban growth, the construction of high-rise concrete and steel buildings, increased electrical noise from overhead wires, large and small appliances and portable radio transmitters have impeded the ability of its radio stations to deliver reliable high quality AM signals to listeners in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton, particularly in downtown areas and in crowded, industrial areas. It stated that a significant number of residents of these cities who describe themselves as CBC listeners have advised the CBC that they have difficulty receiving its radio service in their homes, offices and cars.
5. The CBC proposed to establish FM transmitters with modest power that would cover the urban areas of Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton in order to improve the signal quality of its AM radio stations in those cities. In the case of Regina, the CBC submitted that a second FM transmitter of CBK is needed to provide adequate coverage to Saskatoon, which is within CBK's coverage area. The CBC indicated that its current AM transmitters, which have very large coverage areas outside the urban cores served by these radio stations, would continue to operate with coverage supplemented by these "nested" FM transmitters.
6. The CBC indicated that it had considered other options for improving its signal quality through either modifying the existing coverage patterns of its AM transmitters to increase the strength of its signals in the urban cores, or moving its radio stations from the AM band to the FM band. According to the CBC, its analysis of these options revealed that modifying its AM coverage patterns would require substantial capital costs

and would only produce marginal improvements in these cities while creating coverage gaps in the outlying areas that could potentially require the addition of more transmitters. The CBC maintained that it would be impossible for stand-alone FM undertakings to replicate the coverage provided by its AM transmitters because the overall spectrum availability on the FM band for high power radio stations has decreased. The CBC further argued that converting its AM radio stations to the FM band would require the use of a large number of FM transmitters operating at different frequencies to serve the same areas.

7. The CBC contended that the current coverage of its AM signals in the outlying areas would be best optimized by its proposed nesting solution which, in improving service to the urban cores, would also permit the CBC to maintain its existing wide coverage patterns outside the cities. The CBC argued that such a solution would limit its capital costs and the future need for additional FM transmitters and frequencies.
8. The CBC added that, over the past decade, radio listening across Canada has shifted from the AM band to the FM band. It argued that AM tuning in each of the Winnipeg, Regina/Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton markets is declining or, at the very least, stagnant, thereby precluding the CBC from increasing its market share in these markets. By means of comparison, the CBC maintained that its position on the FM band in Ottawa and Toronto, Ontario as well as in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick has permitted it to gain market share in those markets.

Interventions

9. The Commission received many interventions in support of these applications. In addition, O.K. Radio Group Ltd. (O.K. Radio) filed an intervention in opposition to the CBC's application to add an FM transmitter of CHFA Edmonton in Edmonton. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) filed comments on all of the applications while Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. (Golden West), the licensee of radio stations in various communities in western Canada, commented on the proposed transmitters in Saskatoon and Edmonton.
10. O.K. Radio is the licensee of CKER-FM Edmonton, which operates at 101.7 MHz (channel 269C). Noting that the CBC proposed to operate its FM transmitter of CHFA at 101.1 MHz (channel 266A), the third adjacent channel to CKER-FM's channel, O.K. Radio expressed concern that the CBC's proposed transmitter could cause interference with CKER-FM.
11. The CAB and Golden West submitted that the Commission should establish a policy outlining the specific conditions that would justify the use of nested FM transmitters of AM stations as well as guidelines specifying the evidence that must be presented in support of applications for such transmitters. In the CAB's view, a public policy process on this issue is needed to ensure that public and private broadcasters would be able to file applications for nested FM transmitters of AM stations on equal footing.

CBC's replies

12. In response to O.K. Radio, the CBC stated that it would adjust the near field antenna pattern of its transmitter in Edmonton to reduce any possible interference to CKER-FM.
13. In response to the CAB and Golden West, the CBC stated that it has a responsibility to ensure all Canadians can receive its programming. The CBC submitted that solutions to technical difficulties are specific to the circumstances of the market served, thereby necessitating a case-by-case approach in dealing with such applications. It added that the Commission has dealt with similar applications in the past and cited *Licence amendment for CBK*, Decision CRTC 99-459, 12 October 1999, as a precedent in which the Commission approved an application by the CBC to add an FM transmitter in Regina that would broadcast the programming of its AM radio station in Regina in order to cover the city. Further, the CBC maintained that establishing a public policy proceeding on the issue of nested FM transmitters would create undue delay in dealing with the present applications. It further argued that, because all technical changes have implications with respect to the radio spectrum, there is no basis for selectively focusing on nested FM applications.

Commission's analysis and determination

14. The Commission notes that it received numerous interventions from residents of Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton describing the difficulties they are experiencing in receiving a good quality signal from the CBC radio stations serving their respective communities.
15. The Commission concludes that the use of FM transmitters to rebroadcast the signal of the existing AM radio stations, as proposed by the CBC, is the most financially feasible option for it to deliver a good quality signal to the urban core of these cities while still maintaining good coverage throughout the service area of each radio station. Furthermore, given that section 3(1)(m)(vii) of the *Broadcasting Act* (the Act) specifies that the programming provided by the CBC should "be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means and as resources become available for the purpose", the Commission finds that approval of these applications is appropriate and in the public interest.
16. The Commission is satisfied that the CBC has adequately addressed the concerns raised by O.K. Radio regarding the potential for the proposed FM transmitter of CHFA in Edmonton to cause interference to CKER-FM.
17. With respect to the comments made by the CAB and Golden West, the Commission notes that interested parties will have an opportunity to discuss this issue in the context of the radio policy review, which was recently announced in *Review of the commercial radio policy*, Broadcasting Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 2006-1, 13 January 2006.

18. In light of all the above, the Commission **approves** the applications by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to amend the broadcasting licence for CBK Regina in order to operate an FM transmitter in Saskatoon; to amend the broadcasting licences for CHFA and CBX Edmonton in order to operate FM transmitters in Edmonton; to amend the broadcastings licence for CKSB St-Boniface and CBW Winnipeg in order to operate FM transmitters in Winnipeg; and to amend the broadcasting licence for CBR Calgary in order to operate an FM transmitter in Calgary. The transmitters will operate with the technical parameters indicated in paragraph 2 of this decision.
19. The Commission reminds the licensee that, pursuant to section 22(1) of the Act, this authority will only be effective when the Department of Industry notifies the Commission that its technical requirements have been met, and that broadcasting certificates will be issued.
20. The Commission also reminds the licensee that these applications are approved based on the technical parameters provided in the applications. The proposed transmitters must be implemented according to the technical parameters specified in paragraph 2 of this decision.
21. The transmitters must be operational at the earliest possible date and in any event no later than 24 months from the date of this decision, unless a request for an extension of time is approved by the Commission before 16 March 2008. In order to ensure that such a request is processed in a timely manner, it should be submitted in writing at least 60 days before that date.

Secretary General

This decision is to be appended to each licence. It is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined in PDF format or in HTML at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>