



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-9

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Reference: 2021-165

Ottawa, 24 January 2022

Gulf Islands Community Radio Society
Salt Spring Island, British Columbia

Public record for this application: 2018-1112-5
Public hearing in the National Capital Region
8 July 2021

Community radio station and transmitter on Salt Spring Island

The Commission **approves** an application for a broadcasting licence to operate an English-language community FM radio station as well as a rebroadcasting transmitter on Salt Spring Island.

Application

1. The Commission has the authority, pursuant to subsection 9(1) of the *Broadcasting Act* (the Act), to issue and renew licences for such terms not exceeding seven years and subject to such conditions related to the circumstances of the licensee as it deems appropriate for the implementation of the broadcasting policy set out in subsection 3(1) of the Act.
2. Gulf Islands Community Radio Society (GICRS) filed an application for a broadcasting licence to operate an English-language community FM radio station on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, as well as a rebroadcasting transmitter also on Salt Spring Island. The proposed station would operate at 107.9 MHz (channel 300A) with an average effective radiated power (ERP) of 313 watts (maximum ERP of 850 watts with an effective height of the antenna above average terrain [EHAAT] of 219.8 metres). The rebroadcasting transmitter would operate at 102.1 MHz (channel 271A) with an average ERP of 4 watts (maximum ERP of 18 watts with an EHAAT of 635.4 metres).
3. GICRS stated that the station would serve the Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia, including Salt Spring Island and large portions of Galiano Island, Pender Island, Mayne Island and Saturna Island.
4. GICRS is a registered not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the *Society Act* in British Columbia. Effective control of GICRS is exercised by its board of directors,

six out of seven of which are Canadians who reside in Canada. Therefore, GICRS satisfies the requirements of the *Direction to the CRTC (Ineligibility of Non-Canadians)*.

5. The applicant indicated that, during each broadcast week, the station would broadcast 126 hours of programming, of which a minimum of 105 hours would be devoted to local programming. The remainder would consist of wrap around programming from the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA).
6. Spoken word programming would include 4.5 hours per broadcast week of newscasts. The applicant indicated that it would also provide localized information on vital issues such as ferry delays, weather warnings, emergency broadcasts on natural disasters as well as amber alerts and major police incidents. Further, GICRS intends to include a segment hosted by Diverse and Inclusive Salt Spring Island covering issues important to the LGBTQ2+ community. In addition, GICRS intends to include a small French-language component to serve the Francophone population of Salt Spring Island. Finally, the applicant intends to seek out local Indigenous people and to include Indigenous programming on the station.
7. In regard to local talent, the applicant stated that it would devote two hours per broadcast week to local artists. GICRS plans to invite local artists to its studio to record music and to do live or recorded broadcasts from local venues.
8. In regard to volunteer participation, the applicant indicated that it has already recruited and trained volunteers for the online radio station it has been operating since 2016. GICRS stated that it has developed a training protocol for introducing new programmers to the equipment. It will also be working with the NCRA to access its online training on best practices and standards for community radio. In addition, GICRS has communicated with the Gulf Islands Senior Secondary School with a view to offering training in programming and production to high school students.
9. The Commission received 147 interventions from local businesses and organizations and from individuals in support of this application.

Salt Spring Island radio market

10. Salt Spring Island is one of the Gulf Islands in the Strait of Georgia between the British Columbia mainland and Vancouver Island. Salt Spring Island is approximately 85 km west of Vancouver and approximately 50 km north of Victoria. The island falls within the Victoria Central Numeris Area.
11. In Broadcasting Decision 2015-281, the Commission revoked the broadcasting licence for the commercial specialty FM radio station CFSI-FM Salt Spring Island, which was licensed to serve Salt Spring Island in Broadcasting Decision 2007-387. At the time, the Commission recognized that “Canadians living on Salt Spring Island will no longer have access to the radio service of CFSI-FM. However, given that the licensee operated with numerous recurring and serious instances of non-compliance

during its licence term, the Commission is confident that a higher quality radio service could be provided to island residents.”

12. In Broadcasting Decision 2021-53, the Commission determined that the market of Salt Spring Island could sustain a community radio station at this time. Given that no parties other than GICRS expressed interest in serving this market, the Commission considered that publishing a call for applications was not necessary.

Issues

13. After examining the record for this application in light of applicable regulations and policies, the Commission considers that it must address the following issues:
 - the proposed frequencies;
 - the impact on incumbent stations in the market; and
 - the proposed programming.

Proposed frequencies

14. As noted above, the applicant proposed to operate the station at 107.9 MHz (channel 300A) and its rebroadcasting transmitter at 102.1 MHz (channel 271A). The applicant indicated that the use of two frequencies would enable it to cover the area fully given its mountainous topography.
15. The applicant’s proposal has received conditional technical acceptability from the Department of Industry. Therefore, the proposal adheres to the rules governing FM spectrum coordination.
16. The Commission has not identified other frequencies that provide similar or greater coverage to those proposed by the applicant. Consequently, the Commission is of the view that 107.9 MHz and 102.1 MHz are among the last frequencies available to serve Salt Spring Island.

Impact on incumbent stations in the market

17. No originating radio station currently serves the community of Salt Spring Island. However, various radio stations originating from Victoria and Vancouver reach the region. The Commission notes that no opposing interventions were received regarding this application.
18. In light of the above, the Commission finds that approval of this application would not have an undue financial impact on incumbent stations in the market.

Programming

19. Pursuant to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2010-499 (the Campus and Community Radio Policy), the Commission expects community radio stations to provide programming differing in style and substance from that provided by other elements of the broadcasting system, particularly commercial radio stations and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This programming should consist of music, especially Canadian music, not generally heard on commercial stations (including special interest music, as well as styles of popular music seldom broadcast), in-depth spoken word programming and programming targeted to specific groups within the community.

20. The Campus and Community Radio Policy also sets out the following expectations:

Section 3(1)(d)(iii) of the *Broadcasting Act* states, in part, that the Canadian broadcasting system should reflect the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of [Indigenous] peoples. The Commission expects campus and community stations to maintain and strengthen their efforts in these areas in their programming, volunteer involvement and in their employment practices.

21. As noted above, GICRS proposed to broadcast 126 hours of programming, of which a minimum of 105 hours would be devoted to local programming. The programming would feature a broad mix of musical genres and spoken word programming about current events, local opinions and sports reports.

22. In addition, GICRS agreed to adhere to the conditions of licence set out in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2012-304, including the requirement to broadcast a minimum of 15% locally produced spoken word programming each broadcast week and the requirement to devote no less than 20% of its musical selections to musical selections from content subcategories other than content subcategory 21 (Pop, rock and dance).

23. In light of the above, the Commission finds that the programming proposed by GICRS is consistent with the Campus and Community Radio Policy and that it would serve the Salt Spring Island community through a broad variety of programs focused on the community.

24. The applicant intends to broadcast one hour of French-language programming and two hours of Indigenous-language programming per broadcast week. Consequently, the Commission considers it appropriate to grant it authority to do so via a condition of licence permitting the applicant to devote up to 8% of its programming (the equivalent of 10 hours) to French and/or Indigenous-language programming. A **condition of licence** to that effect is set out in the appendix to this decision.

25. The Commission is of the view that the applicant's plan to include programming in Indigenous languages and in French, as well as programming reflective of the LGBTQ2+ community would be valued by the community of Salt Spring Island. The

Commission encourages the applicant to reach out to these communities to foster their participation and to ensure that the programming reflects their interests, concerns and activities.

Conclusion

26. In light of all of the above, the Commission is satisfied that this application complies with the provisions for community radio stations set out in the Campus and Community Radio Policy. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** the application by Gulf Islands Community Radio Society for a broadcasting licence to operate an English-language community FM radio programming undertaking as well as a rebroadcasting transmitter on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. The terms and **conditions of licence** are set out in the appendix to this decision.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Findings regarding market capacity and the appropriateness of issuing a call for radio applications to serve Salt Spring Island*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2021-53, 10 February 2021
- *CFSI-FM Salt Spring Island and its transmitter CFSI-FM-1 Mount Bruce – Revocation of licence*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2015-281, 25 June 2015
- *Standard conditions of licence for campus and community radio stations*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2012-304, 22 May 2012
- *Campus and community radio policy*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2010-499, 22 July 2010
- *Licensing of a radio station to serve Salt Spring Island*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2007-387, 22 October 2007

This decision is to be appended to the licence.

Appendix to Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-9

Terms, conditions of licence, expectation and encouragements for the English-language community FM radio station on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, and its transmitter also on Salt Spring Island

Terms

The licence will expire 31 August 2028.

The station will operate at 107.9 MHz (channel 300A) with an average effective radiated power (ERP) of 313 watts (maximum ERP of 850 watts with an effective height of the antenna above average terrain [EHAAT] of 219.8 metres).

The rebroadcasting transmitter will operate at 102.1 MHz (channel 271A) with an average ERP of 4 watts (maximum ERP of 18 watts with an EHAAT of 635.4 metres).

Pursuant to subsection 22(1) of the *Broadcasting Act*, no licence may be issued until the Department of Industry notifies the Commission that its technical requirements have been met and that a broadcasting certificate will be issued.

Furthermore, the Commission will issue a licence for this undertaking only once the applicant has informed the Commission in writing that it is prepared to commence operations. The undertaking must be in operation by no later than **24 January 2024**. To request an extension, the applicant must submit a written request to the Commission at least 60 days before that date, using the form available on the Commission's website.

Conditions of licence

1. The licensee shall adhere to the conditions of licence set out in *Standard conditions of licence for campus and community stations*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2012-304, 22 May 2012, as well as to the conditions set out in the broadcasting licence for the undertaking.
2. In each broadcast week, the licensee may devote up to 8% of its programming to programming in French and/or in Indigenous languages.
3. The licensee shall implement the National Public Alerting System (NPAS) by the **station's launch** in order to comply with the requirements set out in subsections 16(2) and 16(3) of the *Radio Regulations, 1986*, and in *Amendments to various regulations, the standard conditions of licence for video-on-demand undertakings and certain exemption orders – Provisions requiring the mandatory distribution of emergency alert messages*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2014-444 and Broadcasting Orders CRTC 2014-445, 2014-446, 2014-447 and 2014-448, 29 August 2014. As part of this requirement:
 - a) The licensee must file a letter with the Commission to attest to the implementation date of its NPAS within 14 days after the installation. In this

letter, the licensee shall confirm whether maintenance, testing and updating procedures have been adopted for its automated emergency alert message distribution equipment.

- b) The licensee must file with the Commission the results of its first NPAS tests, as scheduled by the relevant alerting authorities or through onsite testing by a qualified installer, within two weeks after the occurrence of such system tests.

Expectation

As set out in *Campus and community radio policy*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2010-499, 22 July 2010, the Commission expects all community and campus licensees to file yearly updates on the composition of their boards of directors. These annual updates can be submitted at the time of submission of annual returns, following annual board of directors' elections, or at any other time. As noted in Appendix 3 to that regulatory policy, licensees may submit such documentation via the Commission's website.

Encouragements

The Commission is of the view that the licensee's plan to include programming in Indigenous languages and in French, as well as programming reflective of the LGBTQ2+ community would be valued by the community of Salt Spring Island. The Commission encourages the licensee to reach out to these communities to foster their participation and to ensure that the programming reflects their interests, concerns and activities.

The Commission considers that community radio stations should be particularly sensitive to employment equity issues in order to reflect fully the communities they serve. It encourages the licensee to consider these issues in its hiring practices and in all other aspects of its management of human resources.