**TV Translator Certification Disclosures**

The State of Alaska (the “State”) provides the following explanatory information in connection with this application (and the certifications in it) due to the unique nature of these facilities.

*Background.* The licenses in the instant application are part of the Alaska Rural Communications System (“ARCS”) – a state-funded system designed to provide free, over-the-air, television programming across much of Alaska. ARCS uses a network of television translators to provide free television programming, including the emergency alert system (EAS), to Alaskan Bush communities. The State is licensee of approximately 100 television translator facilities throughout Alaska that were originally licensed decades ago.

The Alaskan Bush is made up of isolated, remote villages, often more than 500 miles apart. They are extremely “rural, sparsely populated, and in some situations, impoverished communities that are most likely in need of free, over-the-air broadcast television service to connect to the wider world.”[[1]](#footnote-1) ARCS provides the only broadcast television service to these communities, which also have very limited cellular telephone or broadband access.[[2]](#footnote-2) Programming is not determined by the State of Alaska – a group known as the ARCS Council makes programming decisions for ARCS. The Commission granted the first experimental license for facilities that would make form part of the ARCS system more than fifty years ago.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Commission has recognized the unique nature of the television services provided by ARCS when it authorized the facilities that now make up the system,[[4]](#footnote-4) and, more recently, in connection with a waiver of the digital transition deadline for TV translators.[[5]](#footnote-5) Initially, “tape cassettes of selected programs from the four television stations in Anchorage, Alaska would be uplinked to RCA Satcom II satellite by the Alaska Public Broadcasting System” and in the communities served by the translators “small earth receiving stations . . . would be constructed to receive the signals which would be rebroadcast over” the “Mini-TV stations,” as the translator facilities were then known.[[6]](#footnote-6) The initial operation of these stations also included “some cassette material in various Eskimo dialects, not theretofore broadcast over the air . . .”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Operation and licensing of ARCS translator facilities is made challenging by factors that are unique to Alaska and the Alaskan Bush. These facilities “are located at some of the most remote locations in the United States”[[8]](#footnote-8) and in communities that are extremely isolated, some with under 100 residents. Most of these communities are not connected to Alaska’s road system and the equipment is maintained by volunteers in the local communities. At most, Alaska’s harsh climate only allows approximately twelve weeks per year (during Alaskan Summer) for construction or facility maintenance to occur. The sum of these factors is a situation that makes physical site visits extremely challenging.

*Certifications.* The State provides further information for the following certifications:

**Adverse Findings:** The State officer certifying this application has verified that there are no adverse findings pertaining to the State’s TV translators. The State officer certifying this application is not able to certify as to adverse findings against the entire State of Alaska, however. Thus, the State is responding “No” to this certification.

**Rebroadcast Status:** As the Commission is aware, ARCS stations rebroadcast “a mix of programming, [including] Alaskan produced news and public affairs . . . and educational and informational programming from a variety of sources.”[[9]](#footnote-9) The primary channel broadcasts a variety of programming primarily “supplied by commercial television stations in Anchorage, Alaska[,]” as it has done since the 1970s.[[10]](#footnote-10) Currently, the ARCS primary channel rebroadcasts programming originating on KTUU-TV, Anchorage, Alaska (NBC); KTBY(TV), Anchorage, Alaska (FOX); KYES-LD, Anchorage, Alaska (CBS); and KYUR(TV), Anchorage, Alaska (ABC). Additionally, once or twice each year, the primary channel broadcasts conventions of the native communities in the state that do not originate from any broadcast station. The Commission waived its translator rules on its own motion when granting the initial applications for the facilities that make up the network to permit their operation in this manner, explaining that “Alaskans are entitled to the same off-the-air programming routinely enjoyed by other Americans” and that “Alaska’s unique terrain, its remoteness and isolation, justify special treatment regarding its television situation.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

ARCS currently broadcasts:

.1: Programming from Anchorage affiliates of the Big 4 networks, as determined by the ARCS council, a policy committee comprised of members representing the twelve regional nonprofit Native associations in Alaska and six other members.

.2: KAKM(TV), Anchorage, Alaska (Facility ID 804) – Primary channel including PBS’s national program schedule.

.3: KAKM(TV), Anchorage, Alaska (Facility ID 804) – 360 North subchannel – statewide coverage of Alaska public affairs, documentaries, historical programs, and Native topics.

.4: KUAC-TV, Fairbanks, Alaska (Facility ID 69315) – University of Alaska – Fairbanks TV / First Nations Experience subchannel.

**Environmental Effects:** The State officer certifying this application has no actual knowledge or reason to believe that the specified facilities do not comply with the maximum permissible radio frequency electromagnetic exposure limits. However, because of the difficulties the State faces in reaching these remote communities, and because the day-to-day operations are, by necessity, conducted by local community volunteers, the State has not been able to verify electromagnetic levels in connection with the preparation of the instant renewal applications.

**Adherence to Minimum Operating Schedules:** The State officer certifying this application has no actual knowledge or reason to believe that the facilities associated with this license renewal application have been silent for any period of more than thirty (30) days. The State has made a good faith effort to contact representatives in each of the communities of license to determine if any of these facilities have been silent for more than thirty (30) days but recognizes that information from some of these communities may be incomplete or inaccurate.

**Adherence to Operating Parameters:** The State officer certifying this application has no actual knowledge or reason to believe that the facilities associated with this license renewal application are not operating in accordance with licensed parameters. However, the technical parameters associated with these facilities are based on applications originally granted (and technical facilities built out, sometimes by local volunteers) decades ago and located in areas that cannot prudently be reached to confirm their adherence to operating parameters.

*Summary.* As set forth in this exhibit, the State has responded to the certifications in the instant application to the best of its ability, given the unique situation of the ARCS translators and respectfully requests regulatory flexibility, to the extent necessary, for renewal of these translator licenses.

1. *State of Alaska Request for Waiver of Section 74.731(m) of the Commission’s Rules – Low Power Television Analog Termination Date*, Order, 36 FCC Rcd 10765 (2021) (“Digital Transition Deadline Waiver Order”)at footnote 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Id.* at ¶ 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Wrangell Radio Group, Wrangell, Alaska; City of Cordova, Cordova, Alaska; City of Valdez, Valdez, Alaska; Kodiak Public Broadcasting Corp., Kodiak, Alaska; Narrows Broadcasting, Petersburg, Alaska; Kotzebue Broadcasting, Kotzebue, Alaska; City of Nome, Nome, Alaska; For Authority to Construct Television Translator Stations*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 75 F.C.C.2d 404 (1980) (“Mini-TV Waiver Order”) at ¶ 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mini-TV Waiver Order. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Digital Transition Deadline Waiver Order. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mini-TV Waiver Order, 75 F.C.C.2d 404 at ¶ 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Id.* at ¶ 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Digital Transition Deadline Waiver Order*, 36 FCC Rcd 10765* at ¶ 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Id.* at ¶ 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mini-TV Waiver Order, 75 F.C.C.2d 404 at ¶ 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Id*. at ¶ 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)