

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Nevada County Broadcasters, Inc.
1255 East Main Street, "A"
Grass Valley, CA 95945

JUL 30 2009

In re: INTERFERENCE COMPLAINT
K233CA, Grass Valley, CA
BLFT-20081008AKW
Facility ID # 147454

Dear Licensee:

This refers to a interference complaint filed by listener Henry P. Tardif (a copy is attached). The complaint alleges that K233CA is causing interference to the reception of KSSJ(FM).

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 74.1203, K233CA is required to eliminate any actual interference it causes. Therefore, it is necessary for K233CA to submit a detailed report on the attached complaint. For the complaint, the report must include: (1) the name and address of the complainant; (2) specific devices receiving the interference (i.e. type of device, manufacturer's name, model number, and serial number); and (3) any assistance provided by K233CA for each device allegedly receiving the interference and whether such interference persists. Each of the complaints must be addressed individually.

The Commission's Rules regarding FM translators restrict FM translator stations to operate strictly on a secondary basis and limit their service. Section 74.1203(a)(3) states that an FM translator station will not be permitted to continue to operate if it causes any actual radio signal interference to the direct reception by the public of the off-the-air signals of any authorized broadcast station.¹ Actual interference is based on listener complaints indicating that the signal they regularly receive is being impaired by the signal radiated by the FM translator station. Section 74.1203(b) states that if the interference cannot be properly eliminated by the application of suitable techniques, the operation of the offending FM translator station shall be suspended and shall not be resumed until the interference has been eliminated.

¹ An FM translator station creating actual radio signal interference to any authorized broadcast station is obligated to eliminate the interference, regardless of the location where the impaired signal reception occurs.

Within thirty days of this letter, K233CA must take appropriate actions required by the provisions of 47 C.F.R. § 74.1203 to resolve all complaints of interference to fulfill its obligations. Further action on this complaint will be withheld for a period of thirty days from the date of this letter to provide K233CA an opportunity to respond. Failure to correct all complaints within this time may require K233CA to suspend operation pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §§ 74.1203(e) and 74.1232(h).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James D. Bradshaw".

James D. Bradshaw
Deputy Chief
Audio Division
Media Bureau

Attachment

CC: John Garziglia
Henry Tardif

April 3, 2009

Dear FCC staff,

This complaint concerns continuous interference from an FM translator station, K233CA (KNCO), operating on a frequency of 94.5 MHz and located on Wolf Mountain in Grass Valley, California, approx. 1 mi. N.W. from my residence. This translator station came on the air in about late October, 2008 and has since completely blocked or otherwise severely interfered with KSSJ transmissions on a frequency of 94.7 MHz and located in Fair Oaks, CA, approx. 33 miles south of my location at 10395 Luna Dr., Grass Valley, CA 95949 (39° 7' 27" N, 121° 5' 1" W). This interference also extends about five miles north and six miles south of my location on Hwy. 49, the main highway to and from Grass Valley. In the previous four years in which we have lived at this location, KSSJ provided a full-scale, noise-free signal to every tuner, portable radio and automobile radio we used. So, at first, I suspected trouble with KSSJ and called their station to inquire and was informed of the new KNCO translator station just 200 KHz below KSSJ. I was very surprised at this since I did not believe that two stations could be located on adjacent channels in the same area. I then called Mr. Bob Brack, the General Manager of KNCO, (530) 272-3424, and was told that an EMI (electromagnetic interference) Engineer would contact me. I was contacted by Mr. Paul Patterson, (530) 263-1982, in early December 2008 and he visited our home and witnessed the problem but had no measuring instrumentation such as a spectrum analyzer which I believe every EMI Engineer should have access to. He thought a narrow-band trap installed in my MATV (Master Antenna Television) system would help and he agreed to obtain one. After several weeks had passed, I called Mr. Patterson and was advised that he was no longer working for KNCO. So, I called Mr. Brack at KNCO and was told that a new EMI Engineer, Mr. Tim Parish, (916) 300-0435, would contact me. Mr. Parish did contact me and said that a (low cost) FT-7600 Winegard trap was on order and he would bring it to our home for evaluation. When he did, we found no improvement but he had no spectrum analyzer or other instrumentation either so definitive comparisons were not possible. He also brought a Boston Acoustics HD radio for comparison. The analog reception was as poor as anything else we tried and an HD signal could not be received at all with its own short antenna wire. At this point, we thought a more expensive commercial MWT-2b Blonder-Tongue trap might be effective. Weeks later, Mr. Parish brought the new trap for evaluation and, again, we could see no improvement. At this point, I suggested they consider lowering their output power from their translator maximum of 250 Watts to 10 or 15 Watts as I was told many other translator stations operate at this level. Alternatively, I suggested another frequency away from others. Either or both of these changes would have the added benefit of helping the other victims of this interference. www.radio-locator.com lists over 20 such vacant channels in our area and 91.7 and 91.9 MHz seem to be clear +/- 400 KHz. Mr. Parish said he would discuss these options with KNCO's General Manager, Mr. Brack. I was later informed that Mr. Brack was unwilling to consider either reducing power or changing frequencies. At this point, I began researching some of the requirements for FM translator stations and came across the following at <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/translator.html#IX>

"Interference Caused

A translator or booster may not cause predicted or actual interference. If any actual interference is created, the Commission requires the permittee or licensee to resolve all interference complaints by appropriate means. If the interference cannot be resolved, the Commission will require the FM translator or booster station to discontinue operations. See 47 CFR Section 74.1203. A translator construction permit application will not be granted if an objecting party provides *convincing* evidence that the proposed translator station would likely interfere with off-the-air reception of a full service FM station, even if there is no predicted prohibited contour overlap."

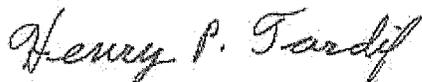
By now, you can probably tell that music and, in particular, the Smooth Jazz format that KSSJ provides is of paramount importance to us. As far as I know, KSSJ is the only FM station in Northern California and certainly the only one I can receive that features this format. On the other hand, KNCO is classified as having a "Hot AC" format of which there are several confirmed alternatives for local listeners: KGBY and KZZO, Sacramento, plus KNCO's primary station in Grass Valley at 94.1 MHz. Since I receive KNCO at 94.1 MHz with a full scale signal, it is unclear to me why they need a translator station at all. Additionally, I have spent countless hours reorienting the antenna, trying various tuners and receivers, adding ferrite clamps around cables running to and from receivers, etc., all to no avail.

With all of this said, please modify the license of K233CA to permit operation on another frequency less likely to be a source of interference to local listeners. If this is not possible, then please require that output power be reduced to something on the order of 10 to 15 Watts or even less if severe interference continues. If that fails, then operation of the translator station must be discontinued as required in the paragraph **"Interference Caused** above.

I would welcome a visit by an FCC representative to independently confirm my claims, make objective measurements and/or suggest other solutions.

Please contact me in any way listed below to confirm your receipt of this complaint at your earliest convenience and to ask for any additional information you may wish for that I have not included above.

Very truly yours,



Henry P. Tardif
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Grass Valley, CA 95949
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Henry_Tardif@msn.com