

Request for Waiver of 73.1125

Hi-Line Radio Fellowship, Inc. ("Hi-Line"), the licensee of noncommercial educational FM radio station KJLF, Butte, MT, hereby respectfully requests a waiver of Section 73.1125 of the Commission's rules (hereinafter referred to as the "main studio rule") to permit the relocation of the main studio of KJLF from its present location in Butte, MT to the main studio of Hi-Line's co-owned station KXEI (NCE-FM), Havre, Montana. The proposed studio location is approximately 327 kilometers outside of the 3.16 mV/m contour of KJLF.

Hi-Line proposes to operate KJLF as a "satellite" station of KXEI. KJLF will be part of a network of radio broadcast stations operated by Hi-Line. Hi-Line is a non-profit corporation and each network station operates noncommercially and broadcasts the noncommercial educational programming carried on the KXEI Network. By co-locating KJLF's main studio at KXEI's main studio in Havre, Hi-Line will realize valuable economies of scale and cost savings, which are needed to maintain the high quality of KXEI's noncommercial educational programming. As a listener-supported station, KJLF will face severe financial constraints. The obligation to maintain separate staffing and studio locations for both KJLF and KXEI will place a serious financial burden on Hi-Line and divert what limited resources are available from KXEI's programming efforts.

To ensure that KJLF fulfills its local service obligations to the residents of Butte, MT, Hi-Line will maintain an auxiliary studio either: 1) in Butte, MT; 2) at a location within the principal community contour of an AM, FM, or TV station licensed

to Butte, MT; or 3) within twenty-five miles from the reference coordinates of the center of Butte, MT. This auxiliary studio will be capable of originating local programming that is responsive to local community needs. Hi-Line will also engage the services of a local Butte public affairs representative to conduct ascertainment surveys of local community leaders and other residents to determine the concerns, problems and needs of Butte listeners, which will be covered in KXEI's news and public affairs programming.

The method for ascertaining the needs and concerns of its Butte listeners will be similar to the method Hi-Line has employed to effectively ascertain the needs of its listeners in other communities where the Commission has granted waivers of the main studio rule. Specifically, Hi-Line will have a local representative, who may be a volunteer, available in the community of Butte. The local representative will work with Hi-Line's Regional Managers and will, at least on a quarterly basis, conduct interviews and surveys in an effort to ascertain the interests, concerns, and needs of the Butte listeners.

Hi-Line's local representative will further serve as a liaison between the residents off Butte and Hi-Line's programming personnel. Finally, Hi-Line will maintain a toll-free telephone number, as required by Section 73.1125(d) of the rules, and maintain a public inspection file for KJLF at the main studio of its parent station, KXEI(FM), Havre, Montana, as required by Section 73.3527 of the Commission's rules, and make reasonable accommodation to listeners wishing to examine the file's contents.

Under Section 73.1125 of the Commission's rules, a broadcast station must maintain its main studio (a) within the station's community of license; (b) at a location within the principal community contour of any AM, FM, or TV broadcast station licensed to the station's community of license; or (c) within 25 miles from the reference coordinates of the center of the station's community of license, except when "good cause" exists for locating the main studio at an alternate location. The Commission traditionally considers waiver requests by noncommercial educational stations on a case-by-case basis. See Main Studio and Program Origination Rules, 3 FCC Rcd 5024 (1988); see also Review of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Main Studio and Local Public Inspection Files of Broadcast Television and Radio Stations, 13 FCC Rcd 15691, 15695 n.18 (1998).

In the context of noncommercial waiver requests, the Commission has expressly and implicitly found "good cause" to exist in numerous instances based solely upon a showing that centralized operations will provide an economic benefit to noncommercial stations which have limited funding, provided that local service obligations are met. See Letter to Roy R. Russo, Esq., dated January 24, 1994; Letter to Richard J. Bodorff, dated January 2, 1992; The President and Board of Trustees of the Miami University, 7 FCC Rcd 2902 (1992); The Cedarville College, 6 FCC Rcd 538 (1991); Letter to Gerald Stevens-Kittner, Esq., dated July 15, 1991; Sound of Life, Inc., 4 FCC Rcd 8273 (1989); Lift Him Up Outreach Ministries, Inc., 3 FCC Rcd 5571 (1988); Georgia State Board of Education, 70 F.C.C.2d 948 (1979), recon. denied, 71 F.C.C.2d 227 (1979); Nebraska Educational Television Comm'n, 4 R.R.2d 771 (1965).

Hi-Line respectfully submits that the instant request presents substantially the same showing of good cause and public interest benefits as each of these waivers noted above. In each case, the Commission staff determined that the waivers were justified on the basis of the limited funding available to the stations and the increased efficiencies resulting from co-location of studios. Like these other waiver applicants, Hi-Line will also experience financial difficulties in maintaining separate staffing and separate facilities for its "parent" and "satellite" stations. Hi-Line will also be fully capable of fulfilling its local service obligations in the same manner as each of these other applicants.

In view of the foregoing, Hi-Line requests that the Commission find pursuant to Section 73.1125(b)(2) of the Commission's rules that the public interest will be served by the consolidation of KJLF's main studio with KXEI's main studio, and authorize Hi-Line to locate KJLF's main studio outside of the city grade community and contour of the station and more than 25 miles from the reference coordinates of the center of Butte, MT.