

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20554

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AUGUST 14, 2000

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1800B3-MH

Donald E. Wildmon, President  
American Family Radio  
P.O. Box 2440  
Tupelo, Ms 38803

In Re: WASM(FM), Natchez, Mississippi  
American Family Association  
Facility ID No.79358  
File No. BMPED-19990915AVH  
Request for Waiver of 47 C.F.R.  
§73.1125 (Main Studio Rule)

Dear Mr. Wildmon:

The staff has under consideration the above-reference request for a waiver of the Commission's main studio requirement, 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125, made by American Family Association ("AFA"). AFA seeks a waiver of Section 73.1125 in order to operate WASM(FM), Natchez, Mississippi as a satellite of its noncommercial educational ("NCE") station, WQST-FM, Forest, Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> For the reasons set forth below, we will waive 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125 and grant AFA's request.

Section 73.1125(a) requires each broadcast station to maintain a main studio within the station's principal community contour to ensure that the station will serve the needs and interests of the residents of its community of license. *Amendment of Sections 73.1125 and 77.1150, 3FCC Rcd 5024, 5027(1988)*. However, under Section 73.1125(a)(4), the Commission will waive this requirement where good cause exists to do so and where the proposed studio location "would be consistent with the operation of the station in the public interest." Each waive request by an NCE station seeking to operate as the satellite of another NCE station is considered on a case-by-case basis. The Commission has recognized the benefits of centralized operations for NCE stations, given their limited funding, and thus found good cause exists to waive the main studio location requirement where satellite operations are proposed. *Id.* A satellite station must,

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<sup>1</sup> A "satellite" station meets all of the Commission's technical rules. However, it originates no programming and instead rebroadcasts the parent station's programming. See *Amendment of Multiple Ownership Rules, Memorandum Opinion and Order*, 3 RR2d 1554, 1562(1964).

however, demonstrate that it will meet its local service obligation to satisfy the Section 73.1125 "public interest" standard. *Id.*

AFA's request is based on the economies of scale, which would be realized by grant of its waiver. We agree and conclude that there is good cause to waive 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125(a)(4) under these circumstances. AFA proposes to operate WASM-FM, Natchez, Mississippi as a satellite station of WQST-FM, Forest, Mississippi, approximately 130 miles from Natchez, Mississippi. Where there is a great distance between the parent and the satellite stations, as here, we are particularly concerned that the licensee takes adequate measures to maintain its awareness of the satellite community's needs and interests. To that end, AFA has pledged to: (1) add to its Community Advisory Board at least one resident of Natchez, who will be asked to provide recommendations on community needs and programming directly to the management of AFA; (2) conduct, on at least an annual basis, interviews with Natchez residents and community leaders to assess community needs and programming; (3) provide periodic local programming for Natchez including coverage of significant local news or cultural events; (4) provide for the broadcast of local public service announcements; and (5) establish a toll-free telephone number to the main studio for residents of Natchez, Mississippi and maintain its public inspection file within the community of Natchez.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances, we are persuaded that AFA will meet its local service obligation and thus, that grant of the requested waiver is consistent with the public interest.

Accordingly, the request made by American Family Association for a waiver of 47 C.F.R. § 73.1125 (File No. BMPED-19990915AVH) IS GRANTED.

Sincerely,



Linda Blair, Chief  
Audio Services Division  
Mass Media Bureau

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<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding this representation, the Commission has recently revised its main studio and public file rules to require that all stations, including noncommercial educational stations operating as "satellite" to maintain their public files as the specified main studio location. Accordingly, WASM(FM) must keep its public file at the WQST-FM studio facility at Highway 80 East, Forest, Mississippi. It must also make reasonable accommodation for listeners wishing to examine the file's contents. See *Review of the Commission's Rules Regarding Main Studio and Local Public Inspection Files of Broadcast Television and Radio Stations*, 64 Fed. Reg. 35,941 (July 2, 1999).