



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2006-537

Ottawa, 20 September 2006

Pineridge Broadcasting Inc.
Cobourg, Ontario

Application 2006-0583-4
Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2006-67
29 May 2006

CKSG-FM Cobourg – Technical change

*The Commission **approves** the application by Pineridge Broadcasting Inc. to amend the broadcasting licence for the radio programming undertaking CKSG-FM Cobourg by increasing the average effective radiated power from 2,070 watts to 4,000 watts and by increasing the antenna height.*

The application

1. The Commission received an application by Pineridge Broadcasting Inc. (Pineridge) to change the authorized contours of the radio programming undertaking CKSG-FM Cobourg, by increasing the average effective radiated power (ERP) from 2,070 watts to 4,000 watts and by increasing the antenna height.
2. Pineridge indicated that the proposed amendments would address coverage problems, including demonstrated technical deficiencies and reception problems, across the station's primary marketing area of Northumberland County and Cobourg in particular. According to Pineridge, these problems are due primarily to stations operating on its frequency from the United States. Pineridge submitted that it has considered a number of options besides an increase to the station's ERP to address the problem, including an application for a synchronous repeater, the upgrading of its facilities and an application for a low-power rebroadcasting transmitter on a different frequency.

Interventions

3. The Commission received several interventions in support of this application and two in opposition. In particular, Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus), the licensee of CKRU and CKWF-FM Peterborough, and CHUM Limited (CHUM), the licensee of CKPT and CKQM-FM Peterborough, expressed their opposition to the technical changes proposed by Pineridge.

4. Both Corus and CHUM submitted that the approval of the proposed technical amendments would allow CKSG-FM's 0.5 mV/m signal to encompass the city of Peterborough, thereby facilitating what Corus claimed was Pineridge's aggressive marketing to Peterborough and the solicitation of its local advertising.
5. CHUM and Corus also submitted that CKSG-FM's authorized contours would greatly increase were the application to be approved. CHUM suggested that the station's coverage area would more than double, and Corus indicated that, according to Pineridge's own population estimates, there would be a 20% increase in the station's 3 mV/m contour and a 40% increase in its 0.5 mV/m contour. In this regard, CHUM suggested the use of a directional antenna to improve signal coverage in areas that are lacking an adequate signal. For its part, Corus suggested the use of a synchronous repeater or a low-power FM rebroadcasting transmitter to address Pineridge's technical issues.

Applicant's reply

6. In addition to reiterating the existence of interference from American stations, Pineridge emphasized the need to fill coverage deficiencies in CKSG-FM's market given the significant amount of out-of-market tuning in the Cobourg area. Pineridge stated that the opposing interveners actively market and solicit advertising in Northumberland County and that their respective 3 mV/m contours cover parts of CKSG-FM's market while their respective 0.5 mV/m contours completely cover the area.
7. Pineridge indicated that while its 0.5 mV/m contour would extend its coverage by approximately 5 kilometers into the Peterborough area, its station would continue to provide spoken word programming of direct and particular relevance to Northumberland County, including the cities of Cobourg and Port Hope. Moreover, Pineridge conceded that it does maintain active relationships with businesses in the Peterborough area because Peterborough is the regional economic centre. Nevertheless, Pineridge noted that Corus and CHUM collectively enjoy a 61% share of the Peterborough market while Pineridge succeeds in attaining only a much smaller share.
8. Finally, Pineridge argued that the proposed technical amendments are the best way to address its coverage problems, noting that a low-power rebroadcasting transmitter would be an inefficient use of the spectrum, while a synchronous repeater could cause interference with the main transmitter of the station. In response to CHUM's intervention, Pineridge noted that the proposed amendments include the use of a directional antenna.

Commission's analysis and determination

9. The Commission notes that CKSG-FM's current 0.5 mV/m contour already encompasses Peterborough. The Commission also notes that the aggregate profit before interest and tax (PBIT) for the Peterborough market in 2005 was much greater than the aggregate PBIT for Cobourg in 2005. For these reasons, the Commission determines that the approval of this application would not result in significant financial hardship to the CHUM and Corus stations in Peterborough.
10. Furthermore, the Commission is satisfied that Pineridge offers a locally relevant service to Cobourg and the surrounding Northumberland County. Given that a majority of tuning in the Cobourg market is out-of-market tuning, the Commission finds that there is merit in improving the ability of Pineridge to compete in the Cobourg market by approving the proposed technical amendments.
11. The Commission acknowledges that increasing the power and the antenna height of CKSG-FM would improve the station's signal quality, especially in the east end of Cobourg and the area going east toward the village of Brighton where co-channel interference from an American station causes signal deficiencies.
12. The Commission notes that, according to the Department of Industry's (the Department's) Broadcasting Procedures and Rules, Part 3 (BPR-3), Section C-1.1.18, a minimum field strength of 3 mV/m is required for satisfactory service to principal target centres. CKSG-FM's signal would therefore not be considered a reliable commercially competitive signal in Peterborough. In addition, the 0.5 mV/m CKSG-FM contour over the entire city of Peterborough is encompassed by a first adjacent interference zone from CHAY-FM Barrie. This interference would degrade a receiver's sensitivity to selectively tune in to CKSG-FM's frequency in Peterborough and reception of the station in that city would remain marginal at best.
13. With regard to CHUM's assertions that Pineridge should consider using a directional antenna to improve the station's coverage in Northumberland County, the Commission notes that CKSG-FM's proposed technical parameters include the use of a directional antenna and the main lobe is directed toward the northeast of Northumberland County.
14. With respect to Corus' statement that CKSG-FM could use a low-power FM rebroadcasting transmitter or a synchronous repeater to mitigate signal deficiencies, the Commission considers that although a low-power FM rebroadcasting transmitter would improve signal quality, it would also present significant disadvantages, including the need to develop a second transmission site, the inefficient use of the spectrum and the absence of protected status which could force such a signal to be displaced at any time. As for the use of a synchronous repeater, the Commission notes that it would also improve signal quality but that a synchronous repeater can be difficult to implement given the possible mutual interference between it and the mother station.

15. In light of all of the above, the Commission **approves** the application by Pineridge Broadcasting Inc. to change the authorized contours of the radio programming undertaking CKSG-FM Cobourg, by increasing the average ERP from 2,070 watts to 4,000 watts and by increasing the antenna height.
16. The Commission reminds the licensee that, pursuant to section 22(1) of the *Broadcasting Act*, this authority will only be effective when the Department notifies the Commission that its technical requirements have been met, and that a broadcasting certificate will be issued.

Secretary General

This decision is to be appended to the licence. It is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined in PDF format or in HTML at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>