



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2025-338

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Reference: 2025-72

Gatineau, 12 December 2025

Public record: 1011-NOC2025-0072

Findings regarding market capacity and the appropriateness of issuing a call for radio applications to serve Wingham, Ontario, and surrounding areas

Summary

In Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-72, the Commission announced that it had received an application from Blackburn Media Inc. (BMI) for a commercial FM radio station to serve Wingham, Ontario, and its surrounding areas.¹ It also requested comments on market capacity and the appropriateness of issuing a call for radio applications.

Based on the public record, the Commission finds that the Wingham market has the capacity to sustain at least one additional radio station at this time. Given the additional interest in serving the market and BMI's proposal to use one of the last known FM frequencies, the Commission has issued a call for applications for a new radio station to serve the Wingham market in Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-339, also published today.

Background

1. In Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-72 (the Notice), the Commission announced that it had received an application from Blackburn Media Inc. (BMI) for a broadcasting licence to operate an English-language commercial FM station serving Wingham, Ontario, and its surrounding areas² to replace its existing AM station in Wingham. The Commission noted that this would use one of the last known FM frequencies available in the area. As a result, the Commission sought comments on market capacity and the appropriateness of a call for radio applications to serve the Wingham market.
2. Wingham is currently served by eight commercial radio stations, three of which are operated by the applicant, BMI. The other stations are operated by Bayshore Broadcasting Corporation (Bayshore), ZoomerMedia Limited, and Lakeside Radio

¹ Surrounding areas include but are not limited to: Walkerton, Paisley, Chesley, Palmerston, South Bruce, Brockton, Mildmay, Hanover, Hawick, Huron-Kinloss, Ripley, and Ayton, Ontario.

² Ibid.

Broadcasting Corp. (Lakeside). There is also one rebroadcasting transmitter operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and one community station operated by Bluewater Radio.

3. Consistent with Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2014-554 (the Policy), the Commission called for comments on the capacity of the Wingham market to support a new station and on the appropriateness of issuing a call for applications to serve this market. The Policy states that, following the receipt of comments, the Commission weighs various factors, such as market capacity, spectrum availability or scarcity, and interest in serving the market when deciding whether to:
 - publish the application for consideration during the non-appearing phase of a public hearing;
 - issue a call for applications (for example, in instances where there is capacity in the market, a limited number of frequencies available or a high probability of multiple applications to serve the market); or
 - make a determination that the market cannot support additional stations, return the application and issue a decision setting out this determination.

Interventions and reply

4. The Commission received four interventions in response to the Notice.
5. In their interventions, Lakeside and FAB Broadcasting Corp. stated that, in their view, the Wingham market is oversaturated, with no capacity for new entrants. They cited difficulties within the general Canadian economy, listing factors such as the lasting economic effects of COVID-19, foreign digital broadcasters, and the trade tariffs imposed by the United States as evidence of no further capacity in this market.
6. Bayshore stated, in its intervention, that the Wingham market area cannot support a new regional radio station. However, regardless of capacity issues, it noted that it would be in the public interest to issue a call for applications due to the frequency scarcity in Wingham.
7. Bayshore further stated its interest in applying for one of these last known frequencies.
8. In its intervention, Bluewater Radio submitted that the entrance of a new FM station would negatively impact all existing broadcasters in the market.
9. In its reply, BMI agreed with interveners' positions that the Wingham market cannot support a new commercial radio station. It stated that it was critical to note that their application would not add a new station to the market, but rather convert an existing AM station to the FM band.

Commission's analysis

10. The Policy states that where an application—whether it is for a new radio station or a licence amendment to an existing service—is proposing to use one of the last known frequencies in a market, the Commission will generally issue a call for applications if the market assessment indicates that there is capacity for an additional radio station. The Commission will take into account the availability or scarcity of spectrum when considering applications proposing to use one of the last known frequencies in a market.
11. The Wingham market has performed strongly over the past six broadcast years. It has been profitable since 2019 and has seen a modest total revenue increase since 2022. The Wingham market has also outperformed the Ontario and national rates of profitability and revenue growth. Given this positive performance, the market has proven resilient.
12. The Wingham market's profits and advertising revenues also proved to be resilient during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, declining at a slower rate than the Ontario and national markets from 2019 to 2021. The Wingham market's advertising revenues have grown slightly despite some fluctuation in the past three years. In comparison, advertising revenues for the provincial and national markets have declined over the past three years.
13. As a result, despite the concerns raised by certain interveners that the licensing of a new station could negatively impact existing commercial stations, the Commission is of the view that the Wingham market is performing strongly and could support an additional radio station.

Conclusion

14. In light of all of the above, the Commission finds that the market of Wingham can sustain at least one additional radio station at this time.
15. Given the additional interest in serving the market and the applicant's proposal to use one of the last known FM frequencies, the Commission has issued a call for applications for a new radio station to serve the Wingham radio market in Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-339, also published today.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Call for applications – Radio station to serve Wingham, Ontario, and surrounding areas*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-339, 12 December 2025

- *Call for comments on market capacity and the appropriateness of issuing a call for radio applications to serve Wingham, Ontario, and surrounding areas*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-72, 6 March 2025
- *A targeted policy review of the commercial radio sector*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2014-554, 28 October 2014