

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of:
African-American Broadcasting
Company of Bellevue, Inc.
v.
Northland Cable TV
Request for Mandatory Carriage of
Television Station KWOG(TV),
Bellevue, Washington
CSR-5716-M

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Adopted: September 26, 2001

Released: October 4, 2001

By the Chief, Consumer Protection and Competition Division, Cable Services Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. African-American Broadcasting Company of Bellevue, Inc. ("African-American"), licensee of television broadcast station KWOG(TV) (Ch. 51), Bellevue, Washington ("KWOG" or the "Station") filed the above-captioned must carry complaint against Northland Cable TV ("Northland"), for failing to carry KWOG on its cable systems serving Bayview/Camano Island, Washington. No opposition to the complaint was received.

II. BACKGROUND

2. Pursuant to Section 614 of the Communications Act and implementing rules adopted by the Commission in Implementation of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, Broadcast Signal Carriage Issues ("Must Carry Order"), commercial television broadcast stations are entitled to assert mandatory carriage rights on cable systems located within the station's market. A station's market for this purpose is its "designated market area," or DMA, as defined by Nielsen Media Research. A DMA is a geographic market designation that defines each television market exclusive of

1 African-American notes that the Station's prior call sign was KBEH(TV). Complaint at 1.

2 8 FCC Rcd 2965, 2976-2977 (1993).

3 Section 614(h)(1)(C) of the Communications Act, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, provides that a station's market shall be determined by the Commission by regulation or order using, where available, commercial publications which delineate television markets base on viewing patterns. See 47 U.S.C. § 534(h)(1)(c). Section 76.55(e) requires that a commercial broadcast television station's market be defined by Nielsen Media Research's DMAs.

others, based on measured viewing patterns.

3. Pursuant to the Commission's must carry rules, cable operators have the burden of showing that a commercial station that is located in the same television market is not entitled to carriage.<sup>4</sup> One method of doing so is for a cable operator to establish that a subject television signal, which would otherwise be entitled to carriage, does not provide a good quality signal to a cable system's principal headend.<sup>5</sup> Should a station fail to provide the required over-the-air signal quality to a cable system's principal headend, it still may obtain carriage rights because under the Commission's rules a television station may provide a cable operator, at the station's expense, with specialized equipment to improve the station's signal to an acceptable quality at a cable system's principal headend.<sup>6</sup>

### III. DISCUSSION

4. In support of its complaint, KWOG states that it is a full power television station licensed to Bellevue, Washington, which is in the Seattle-Tacoma DMA.<sup>7</sup> It states further that Northland operates a cable television system, which is also in the Seattle-Tacoma DMA.<sup>8</sup> KWOG asserts that it formally requested Northland to commence carriage of its signal on the cable system at issue.<sup>9</sup> KWOG claims that Northland did not respond to its requests for mandatory carriage in violation of the Commission's rules, which require cable operators to respond in writing to requests for carriage within 30 days of receipt of such requests.<sup>10</sup> KWOG requests that Northland commence carriage of its signal on channel 51 of the cable system in question.<sup>11</sup>

5. Section 76.55(e) of the Commission's rules provides that commercial television broadcast stations, such as KWOG, are entitled to carriage on cable systems located in the same DMA.<sup>12</sup> As noted above, cable operators have the burden of showing that a commercial television station that is located in the same television market is not entitled to carriage.<sup>13</sup> We find that Northland has failed to meet its burden. Northland did not respond within 30 days to KWOG's letter requesting carriage as required by the Commission's rules nor did it file an opposition to KWOG's must carry complaint.<sup>14</sup> Thus, we find that KWOG is entitled to mandatory carriage on the Northland cable system at issue.

6. With respect to KWOG's channel positioning request, we find that it has properly requested carriage on channel 51 of Northland's cable system, the same channel number on which it is broadcast over-the-air. Pursuant to the Commission's rules, cable operators must comply with the

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<sup>4</sup> See *Must Carry Order*, 8 FCC Rcd at 2990.

<sup>5</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 76.55(c)(3).

<sup>6</sup> *Must Carry Order*, 8 FCC Rcd at 2991.

<sup>7</sup> Complaint at 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* and Attachment A.

<sup>10</sup> Complaint at 2. See 47 C.F.R. § 76.61(a)(2).

<sup>11</sup> Complaint, Attachment A.

<sup>12</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 76.55(e).

<sup>13</sup> See *Must Carry Order*, 8 FCC Rcd at 2990.

<sup>14</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 76.55(c)(3).

channel requirements absent a compelling technical reason.<sup>15</sup> Based on the foregoing, we grant KWOG's complaint.

#### IV. ORDERING CLAUSES

7. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED**, pursuant to Section 614 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. § 534), that the must carry complaint filed by African-American Broadcasting Company of Bellevue, Inc., licensee of television broadcast station KWOG(TV), Bellevue, Washington, against Northland Cable TV **IS GRANTED**.

8. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that Northland **SHALL COMMENCE CARRIAGE** of the KWOG signal on channel 51 of its cable system serving Bayview/Camano Island, Washington, within sixty (60) days from the date of the release of this *Order*.

9. This action is taken pursuant to authority delegated by Section 0.321 of the Commission's rules.<sup>16</sup>

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Deborah E. Klein, Chief  
Consumer Protection and Competition Division  
Cable Services Bureau

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<sup>15</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 76.57; *see Must Carry Order* at 2988.

<sup>16</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 0.321.