



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

March 8, 2006

DA 06-539

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CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Viacom International Inc.
WTOG(TV)
2000 K Street, N.W.
Suite 725
Washington, D.C. 20006-1809

Re: Viacom International Inc.
WTOG(TV), St. Petersburg, FL
Facility ID No. 74112
File No. BRCT-20041001ALB

Dear Licensee:

This refers to your license renewal application for station WTOG(TV), St. Petersburg, FL.

In the Children's Television Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-437, 104 Stat. 996-1000, *codified at* 47 U.S.C. Sections 303a, 303b and 394, Congress directed the Commission to adopt rules, *inter alia*, limiting the number of minutes of commercial matter that television stations may air during children's programming, and to consider in its review of television license renewals the extent to which the licensee has complied with such commercial limits. Pursuant to this statutory mandate, the Commission adopted Section 73.670 of the Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 73.670, which limits the amount of commercial matter which may be aired during children's programming to 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays. The Commission also reaffirmed and clarified its long-standing policy against "program-length commercials." The Commission defined a "program-length commercial" as "a program associated with a product, in which commercials for that product are aired," and stated that the entire duration of any program-length commercial would be counted as commercial matter for the purpose of the children's television commercial limits. *Children's Television Programming*, 6 FCC Rcd 2111, 2118, *recon. granted in part*, 6 FCC Rcd 5093, 5098 (1991). The commercial limitations became effective on January 1, 1992. *Children's Television Programming*, 6 FCC Rcd 5529, 5530 (1991).

On October 1, 2004, you filed the above-referenced license renewal application for station WTOG(TV). In response to Section IV, Question 5 of that application, you certify that, during the previous license term, station WTOG(TV) failed to comply with the limitations on commercial matter in children's programming specified in Section 73.670 of the Commission's

Rules (Rules).¹ In Exhibit 19 to that application, you indicate that station WTOG(TV) exceeded the children's television commercial limits on one occasion. Specifically, you report that on Sunday, August 25, 2002, station WTOG(TV) aired a commercial for "Buzz Lightyear" cereal during the "Buzz Lightyear" program. You attribute the violation to inadvertence.

In *Children's Television Programming (Recon.)*, the Commission stated that, in order to avoid being considered a program-length commercial, commercial matter related to a children's program must be separated from that program "by intervening and unrelated program material." 6 FCC Rcd at 5099. To ensure that there was no confusion, the Commission "specifically note[d] that intervening commercial matter will not suffice as a separation device." *Id.* at 5099 n.89. The Commission made it clear in *Children's Television Programming*, moreover, that program-length commercials, by their very nature, are extremely serious, stating that the program-length commercial policy "directly addresses a fundamental regulatory concern, that children who have difficulty enough distinguishing program content from unrelated commercial matter, not be all the more confused by a show that interweaves program content and commercial matter." 6 FCC Rcd at 2118.

Although Viacom International Inc. (Viacom) attributes the violation to inadvertence, the Commission has repeatedly rejected inadvertence as a basis for excusing violations of the children's television commercial limits. *See, e.g., LeSea Broadcasting Corp. (WHKE(TV))*, 10 FCC Rcd 4977 (MMB 1995); *Buffalo Management Enterprises Corp. (WIVB-TV)*, 10 FCC Rcd 4959 (MMB 1995); *Act III Broadcasting License Corp. (WUTV(TV))*, 10 FCC Rcd 4957 (MMB 1995); *Ramar Communications, Inc. (KJTV(TV))*, 9 FCC Rcd 1831 (MMB 1994). However, while we consider any violation of our rules limiting the amount of commercial matter in children's programming to be significant, the broadcast of the one program-length commercial described in your renewal application appears to have been an isolated occurrence. Though we do not rule out more severe sanctions for a violation of this nature in the future, we have determined that an admonition is appropriate at this time.

Therefore, based upon the facts and circumstances before us, we ADMONISH you for the admitted violation of Section 73.670 of the Commission's Rules described in station WTOG(TV)'s renewal application. We remind you that the Commission expects all commercial television licensees to comply with the limits on commercial matter in children's programming.

¹ 47 C.F.R. § 73.670.

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, a copy of this letter shall be sent by First Class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested to Viacom International Inc. at the address listed above.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Kreisman
Chief, Video Division
Media Bureau