

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

In the Matter of )
)
Amendment of Section 73.622(j), Table of TV ) MB Docket No. 23-296
Allotments, Television Broadcast Stations ) RM-11964
(Des Moines, Iowa) )

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

Adopted: August 29, 2023

Released: August 29, 2023

Comment Date: [30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]
Reply Comment Date: [45 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]

By the Chief, Video Division, Media Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Video Division, Media Bureau has before it a petition for rulemaking filed by Iowa Public Broadcasting Board (Petitioner or IPB), the licensee of noncommercial educational television PBS member station KDIN-TV (KDIN-TV or Station), channel \*11, Des Moines, Iowa.1 The Petitioner requests the substitution of channel \*34 in place of channel \*11 at Des Moines, Iowa in the Table of TV Allotments,2 and requests that we delete vacant channel \*34, Ames, Iowa and substitute it with the allotment of vacant channel \*21 to Ames, Iowa.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In support of its channel substitution request, the Petitioner asserts that allowing the Station to move from a VHF to a UHF channel would serve the public interest by resolving viewer reception challenges and significantly improving the Station’s over-the-air-service to the viewers in its existing service area.3 Petitioner includes with its Petition a number of viewer complaints highlighting current reception problems.4 Petitioner states that the Commission has recognized that VHF channels pose challenges for their use in providing digital television service, including propagation characteristics that allow undesired signals and noise to be receivable at relatively far distances and large variability in the performance of indoor antennas available to viewers, with most antennas performing very poorly on high VHF channels.5 An engineering statement provided by the Petitioner confirms that the proposed channel \*34 contour would provide full principal community coverage to Des Moines, Iowa.6 The proposed move from channel \*11 to channel \*34 is also not predicted to create a loss of service to any

1 Petition of Iowa Public Broadcasting Board for Rulemaking, LMS File No. 0000210675 (filed Feb. 13, 2023), as amended Aug. 2, 2023 (Petition). Noncommercial educational television stations are identified in the Table of TV Allotments by an asterisk to indicate they are reserved for noncommercial educational use. 47 CFR § 73.622(a).

2 47 CFR § 73.622(j).

3 Petition at 2.

4 Petition at Exhibit B.

5 Id. at 3-4 (citing Innovation in the Broadcast Television Bands: Allocations, Channel Sharing and Improvements to VHF, ET Docket No. 10-235, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 25 FCC Rcd 16498, 16511, paras. 42, 44 (2010)).

6 Petition at Exhibit A.

viewers<sup>7</sup> and according to the engineering statement “will actually increase the area covered while serving the population with higher signal levels.”<sup>8</sup>

3. Petitioner acknowledges that the proposed channel substitution would not meet the distance separation requirements regarding the vacant channel \*34 allotment at Ames, Iowa.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Petitioner requests that simultaneously with the substitution of channel \*34 at Des Moines, Iowa, we delete the vacant channel \*34 allotment at Ames, Iowa and substitute it with the allotment of vacant channel \*21 to Ames, Iowa.<sup>10</sup> As stated in its supplemental engineering statement, the proposed channel \*21 is described as meeting the distance criteria found in section 73.623(d) of the Commission’s rules (rules), and an analysis using the Commission’s *TVStudy* software is provided showing no interference to any other station or allotment.<sup>11</sup>

### III. DISCUSSION

4. We believe that the Petitioner’s channel substitution proposal warrants consideration. Channel \*34 can be substituted in place of channel \*11 at Des Moines, Iowa, as proposed, in compliance with the principal community coverage requirements of section 73.625(a) of the rules,<sup>12</sup> at coordinates 41° 48’ 33.0” N and 93° 36’ 54.0” W. We also find that this proposed channel change meets the technical requirements set forth in sections 73.616 and 73.623 of the rules.<sup>13</sup> The proposal also appears to not result in any loss of service to existing viewers. Thus, we propose to substitute channel \*34 in place of channel \*11 for KDIN-TV with the following specifications:

<u>City and State</u>	<u>Channel</u>	<u>Power (kW)</u>	<u>Antenna HAAT (m)</u>
Des Moines, Iowa	*34	1000	600

5. We also believe that the Petitioner’s request that we delete vacant channel \*34, Ames, Iowa, and substitute it with the allotment of vacant channel \*21 to Ames, Iowa warrants consideration. Channel \*21 can be substituted in place of channel \*34 at Ames, Iowa, as proposed, in compliance with the principal community coverage requirements of section 73.625(a)<sup>14</sup> of the Commission’s rules, at coordinates 41° 58’ 49.0” N and 93° 44’ 24.0” W. We also find that this proposed channel change meets the technical requirements set forth in sections 73.616 and 73.623 of the rules.<sup>15</sup> Thus, we propose to allot vacant channel \*21 in place of channel \*34 with the following specifications:

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at Exhibit A and 2.

<sup>8</sup> Petition at Exhibit A.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 3. See 47 CFR § 73.623(d)(2).

<sup>10</sup> Petition at 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*, Engineering Statement and Exhibits at 21-30. Petitioner also asserts that channel \*21 is a suitable allotment substitution because it is technically superior since the proposed allotment could serve almost twice the area and almost two hundred thousand additional persons. In arriving at this conclusion, Petitioner compared the proposed channel \*21 allotment to the last-licensed facilities on channel \*34 at Ames, Iowa in Appendix B of the *Advanced Television Systems and their Impact Upon the Existing Television Broadcast Service*, MM Docket No. 87-268, Memorandum Opinion and Order on Reconsideration of the Sixth Report and Order, 13 FCC Rcd 7418 (1998). See Petition at 3 and n.6. Notwithstanding that we generally consider that service to more persons than fewer is in the public interest and agree that the showing indicates this is the case for the proposed allotment, we tentatively conclude that no weight should be given to the Petitioner’s assertions that the allotment would serve more people as we cannot know at this time what a potential applicant would ultimately construct at the proposed allotment.

<sup>12</sup> 47 CFR § 73.625(a).

<sup>13</sup> 47 CFR §§ 73.616, 73.623.

<sup>14</sup> 47 CFR § 73.625(a).

<sup>15</sup> 47 CFR §§ 73.616, 73.623.

<u>City and State</u>	<u>Channel</u>	<u>Power (kW)</u>	<u>Antenna HAAT (m)</u>
Ames, Iowa	*21	1000	365

6. Accordingly, we seek comment on the proposed amendment of the Table of TV Allotments, section 73.622(j) of the rules,<sup>16</sup> for the communities listed below, to read as follows:

<u>City and State</u>	<u>Channel No.</u>	
	<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Ames, Iowa	5, 23, *34	5, *21, 23
Des Moines, Iowa	8, *11, 13, 16, 19	8, 13, 16, 19, *34

#### IV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

7. *Showings Required.* Comments are invited on the proposal discussed in this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (*NPRM*). The Petitioner or any proponent that expresses interest in the allotment will be expected to answer whatever questions are presented in initial comments. The petitioner of a proposed allotment is required to file comments even if it only resubmits or incorporates by reference its former pleadings. The petitioner must restate its present intention to apply for the channel if it is allotted and, if authorized, to build a station promptly.<sup>17</sup> Failure to file may lead to denial of the request. Any requests by a proponent for withdrawal or dismissal of an allotment request must be filed with the Commission in accordance with section 1.420(j) of the rules.<sup>18</sup>

8. *Cut-off Protection.* The following procedures will govern the consideration of the filings in this proceeding:

- (a) Counterproposals advanced in this proceeding itself will be considered, if advanced in initial comments, so that parties may comment on them in reply comments. They will not be considered if advanced in reply comments.<sup>19</sup>
- (b) The filing of a counterproposal may lead the Commission to allot a different channel than was requested in the Petition.<sup>20</sup>

9. *Comments and Reply Comments.* Pursuant to sections 1.415, 1.419, and 1.420 of the rules,<sup>21</sup> interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates indicated on the first page of this document. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS).<sup>22</sup>

- **Electronic Filers:** Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/>. Parties that choose to file electronically only need to submit one copy of each filing so long as the submission conforms to all procedural and filing requirements. Online filing is optional.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing. Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier,

<sup>16</sup> 47 CFR § 73.622(j).

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., *Buffalo, Iola, Normangee, and Madisonville, Texas*, MB Docket No. 07-729, Report and Order, 24 FCC Rcd 8192, 8194, para. 9 (Aud. Div. 2009).

<sup>18</sup> 47 CFR § 1.420(j).

<sup>19</sup> 47 CFR § 1.420(d).

<sup>20</sup> 47 CFR § 1.420(g)(2).

<sup>21</sup> 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419, and 1.420.

<sup>22</sup> See *Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission. Any paper filing that is not addressed to the Office of the Secretary will be treated as filed on the day it is received in the Office of the Secretary. Accordingly, failure to follow the specified requirements may result in the treatment of a filing as untimely.

- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 45 L Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20554.
- Effective March 19, 2020, and until further notice, the Commission no longer accepts any hand or messenger delivered filings. This is a temporary measure taken to help protect the health and safety of individuals, and to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.<sup>23</sup>
- During the time the Commission's building is closed to the general public and until further notice, if more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of a proceeding, paper filers need not submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number; an original and one copy are sufficient.

10. *Service.* Pursuant section 1.420 of the rules,<sup>24</sup> all submissions by parties to this proceeding or by persons acting on behalf of such parties must be made in written comments, reply comments, or other appropriate pleadings. The person filing the comments shall serve comments on the petitioners. Reply comments shall be served on the person(s) who filed comments to which the reply is directed. A certificate of service shall accompany such comments and reply comments.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, a copy of such comments should be served on counsel for petitioner, as follows:

Derek Teslik  
Gray Miller Persh LLP  
2233 Wisconsin Ave., NW  
Suite 226  
Washington, D.C. 20007

11. *Ex Parte Notices—Restricted.* The proceeding this Notice initiates shall be treated as a “restricted” proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.<sup>26</sup> For purposes of this restricted notice and comment rulemaking proceeding, members of the public are advised that no *ex parte* presentations are permitted from the time the Commission adopts a notice of proposed rulemaking until the proceeding has been decided and such decision in the applicable docket is no longer subject to reconsideration by the Commission or review by any court.<sup>27</sup> An *ex parte* presentation is not prohibited if specifically requested by the Commission or staff for the clarification or adduction of evidence or resolution of issues in the proceeding.<sup>28</sup> However, any new written information elicited from such a request or any summary of any new information shall be served by the person making the presentation upon the other parties to the proceeding in a particular docket unless the Commission specifically waives

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<sup>23</sup> See *FCC Announces Closure of FCC Headquarters Open Window and Change in Hand-Delivery Policy*, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 2788 (2020).

<sup>24</sup> 47 CFR § 1.420.

<sup>25</sup> See 47 CFR § 1.420(a), (b), and (c).

<sup>26</sup> 47 CFR §§ 1.1200 *et seq.*

<sup>27</sup> 47 CFR § 1.1208.

<sup>28</sup> 47 CFR § 1.1204(a)(10).

this service requirement.<sup>29</sup> Any comment that has not been served on the petitioner constitutes an *ex parte* presentation and shall not be considered in the proceeding. Any reply comment which has not been served on the person(s) who filed the comment, to which the reply is directed, constitutes an *ex parte* presentation and shall not be considered in the proceeding.

12. *Availability of Documents.* Comments, reply comments, and *ex parte* submissions will be available for public inspection via ECFS (<http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/>). Documents will be available electronically in ASCII, Microsoft Word, and/or Adobe Acrobat.

13. *Paperwork Reduction and Regulatory Flexibility.* The Commission has determined that the relevant provisions of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended,<sup>30</sup> do not apply to a rulemaking proceeding to amend the Table of Allotments, section 73.622(j) of the rules.<sup>31</sup> This document does not contain proposed information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.<sup>32</sup> In addition, therefore, it does not contain any proposed information collection burden “for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees,” pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002.<sup>33</sup>

14. *People with Disabilities.* To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov) or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (tty).

15. *Additional Information.* For further information concerning the proceeding listed above, contact Emily Harrison, Video Division, Media Bureau, (202) 418-1665, [Emily.Harrison@fcc.gov](mailto:Emily.Harrison@fcc.gov).

## V. ORDERING CLAUSES

16. **IT IS ORDERED** that, pursuant to authority found in 47 U.S.C. sections 4(i), 5(c)(1), 303(g), and (r), and 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 155(c)(1), 303(g), (r), and 307(b) and sections 0.61, 0.204(b), and 0.283 of the rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.61, 0.204(b), and 0.283, **IT IS PROPOSED TO AMEND** the Table of Allotments, section 73.622(j) of the rules, 47 CFR § 73.622(j), as set forth in this *NPRM*, and this *NPRM IS ADOPTED*.

17. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that, pursuant to applicable procedures set forth in sections 1.415, 1.419, 1.420 of the rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419, and 1.420, interested parties may file comments, including counterproposals, on the *NPRM* in MB Docket No. 23-296 and RM-11964 on or

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<sup>29</sup> 47 CFR § 1.1204(a)(10)(ii). In addition, an oral presentation in a restricted proceeding not designated for hearing requesting action by a particular date or giving reasons that a proceeding should be expedited other than the need to avoid administrative delay is permitted. A detailed summary of the presentation must be filed in the record and served by the person making the presentation on the other parties to the proceeding, who may respond in support or opposition to the request for expedition, including by oral *ex parte* presentation, subject to the same service requirement. 47 CFR § 1.1204(a)(11).

<sup>30</sup> See 5 U.S.C. § 603. The RFA, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 601 *et seq.*, has been amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA), Pub. L. No. 104-121, Title II, 110 Stat. 857 (1996). The SBREFA was enacted as Title II of the Contract with America Advancement Act of 1996 (CWAAA).

<sup>31</sup> 47 CFR § 73.622(j).

<sup>32</sup> See 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3520.

<sup>33</sup> See 44 U.S.C. § 3506(c)(4).

before thirty (30) days after publication in the Federal Register and reply comments on or before forty five (45) days after publication in the Federal Register.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Barbara A. Kreisman  
Chief, Video Division  
Media Bureau