

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

In the Matter of) File No.: EB-FIELDSCR-24-00036287¹
Robert Bekune) NAL/Acct. No.: 202632010004
Irvington, New Jersey) FRN: 0037861044
)

NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY FOR FORFEITURE

Adopted: January 12, 2026

Released: January 12, 2026

By the Acting Chief, Enforcement Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture (NAL), we propose a penalty of \$20,000 against Robert Bekune (Bekune) for operating an unauthorized radio station, known as “Powerhouse Radio” on 98.5 MHz in Irvington, New Jersey (Station), by which Bekune apparently willfully and knowingly did, caused, or suffered to be done pirate radio broadcasting on January 21, 2025. Operating an unauthorized, or pirate, radio station is illegal under the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (Communications Act or Act),² and undermines the primary mission of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) to manage radio spectrum. Such illegal operations can interfere with licensed communications, including authorized broadcasts and communications by public safety entities. Moreover, such illegal operations pose a danger to the public because they interfere with licensed stations that inform their listeners of important public safety messages, including Emergency Alert System transmissions that provide vital information regarding weather events and other dangers to the public.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Legal Framework

2. On January 24, 2020, Congress passed the Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement Act (PIRATE Act), which was subsequently codified as section 511 of the Communications Act.³ Section 511 states that any person who willfully and knowingly does, causes or suffers to be done any pirate radio broadcasting shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$2,000,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each day during which such offense occurs.⁴ Both of these figures are subject to annual

¹ The investigation began under File No. EB-FIELDNER-18-00026247 and was subsequently assigned File No. EB-FIELDSCR-24-00036287. Any future correspondence with the Commission concerning this matter should reflect the new case number.

² 47 U.S.C. § 511.

³ *Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement Act*, Pub. L. 116-109, 134 Stat. 3 (2020) (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 511).

⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 511(a)-(b). Prior to the passage of the PIRATE Act, the maximum monetary penalty for pirate radio transmissions was \$151,005. See 47 CFR §1.80(b)(9)(ii) (2019); see also *Acerome Jean Charles*, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, 34 FCC Rcd 12744 (2019) (proposing a penalty of \$151,005), consent decree adopted, Order, 35 FCC Rcd 6878 (2020). In 2020, that maximum limit was increased to \$2,000,000. See 47 U.S.C. § 511.

inflation adjustments.⁵ Section 511 defines pirate radio broadcasting as “the transmission of communications on spectrum frequencies between 535 and 1705 kilohertz, inclusive, or 87.7 and 108 megahertz, inclusive, without a license issued by the Commission, but does not include unlicensed operations in compliance with part 15 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations.”⁶ Part 15, among other requirements, states that unlicensed operators in the FM band must not transmit over a certain low-power limit.⁷

B. Factual Background

1. Pre-PIRATE Act Investigation

3. Bekune has been involved in the operation of the Station since at least 2018, preceding the PIRATE Act. On February 13, 2018, based on a complaint, field agents (Agents) from the FCC’s New York Field Office observed what appeared to be an unauthorized FM broadcast station operating on 98.5 MHz in Irvington, New Jersey. Using direction-finding techniques, Agents determined that the source of the signal on 98.5 MHz was located in an industrial property at 149 Coit Street, Irvington, New Jersey (Coit Street Site). Agents took field strength measurements of the Station’s signal and determined that it exceeded the power limits in part 15 of the Commission’s rules.⁸ Agents also observed an FM broadcast antenna on the roof of the property and a large sign on the property’s fence which included the following: “Listen Live - PowerHouse Radio 98.5 FM” and “Founder Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune.”⁹ A review of Commission records revealed no authorization for any FM broadcast station to operate at or near the Coit Street Site on any frequency.

2. PIRATE Act Investigation

4. On January 21, 2025, Agents monitored the frequency 98.5 MHz and, using direction-finding techniques, traced the source of the transmissions to the Coit Street Site.¹⁰ Agents took field strength measurements of the Station’s signal and determined that it exceeded the limits for operation under part 15 of the Commission’s rules.¹¹ They also made audio recordings of the broadcast which identified the name of the operator and the Station.¹² During station identification, the broadcaster stated, “Thank you for listening to Emancipation Hour with our Papa Reverend and Prophet Robert Bekune on Powerhouse Radio 98.5 FM, the station of divine emancipation.”¹³ Agents confirmed that the sign first

⁵ See 47 CFR § 1.80(b)(6) (setting the current inflation adjusted statutory maximum for a violation of 47 U.S.C. § 511(a) at \$2,453,218 and of 47 U.S.C. § 511(b) at \$122,661); *Amendment of Section 1.80(b) of the Commission’s Rules, Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties to Reflect Inflation*, Order, 40 FCC Rcd 25, 32 at Table 5 to Paragraph (b)(12)(ii) (EB Jan. 3, 2025); *see also* Annual Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties to Reflect Inflation, 90 Fed. Reg. 3710 (Jan. 15, 2025) (setting January 15, 2025, as the effective date for the increases).

⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 511(h).

⁷ 47 CFR § 15.239(b) (stating that the field strength of any emissions in the 88-108 MHz band shall not exceed 250 microvolts/meter (“ μ V/m”) at 3 meters).

⁸ *Id.*; *see also* February 13, 2018 Field Strength Measurements (on file in EB-FIELDNER-18-00026247).

⁹ *See* February 14, 2018 Photographs of antenna and sign on property (on file in EB-FIELDNER-18-00026247).

¹⁰ They also photographed the sign on the fence in front of the property advertising the station “Powerhouse Radio 98.5 FM” and identifying a website address and phone number to “listen live.”

¹¹ *See* 47 CFR § 15.239(b).

¹² *See* January 21, 2025 Audio of 98.5 over-the-air broadcast (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287). A few months earlier, on November 18, 2024, Agents compared the over-the-air broadcast on 98.5 MHz with the content playing on the Station’s online streaming website and found that they were identical. *See* November 18, 2024 Video comparing the over-the-air broadcast on 98.5 MHz and the online audio stream from <https://us6frenew.radiostream321.com/> (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287).¹³ *See* January 21, 2025 Audio of 98.5 over-the-air broadcast (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287).

¹³ *See* January 21, 2025 Audio of 98.5 over-the-air broadcast (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287).

observed on February 13, 2018, was still in place at the Coit Street Site.¹⁴ A review of Commission records revealed no authorization for any FM broadcast station to operate at or near the Coit Street Site on any frequency.

5. During the course of the investigation, Agents conducted social media research on Bekune and found additional evidence linking him to the Station. Posts found on Bekune's YouTube account include multiple videos of Bekune with a text crawl below stating "please join us everyday @5PM sharp on Powerhouse Radio 98.5FM."¹⁵ Bekune's YouTube account also includes a video showing him broadcasting in a studio with a banner behind him advertising "Powerhouse Radio."¹⁶ Information for the Station's online streaming site identifies the contact for the Station as "Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune (Founder of Powerhouse of Faith International Ministries) @149 Coit St., Irvington, NJ, 07111."¹⁷ A video posted on Facebook includes an interview with Bekune, during which he is introduced as CEO of Powerhouse Radio 98.5 FM.¹⁸ A banner is displayed in the background of the video advertising "Powerhouse Radio 98.5fm."¹⁹

III. DISCUSSION

6. We find that Bekune, in apparent violation of section 511 of the Act,²⁰ willfully and knowingly did, caused, or suffered to be done pirate radio broadcasting on January 21, 2025, through the operation of an unlicensed radio station, known as "Powerhouse Radio" on 98.5 MHz. Agents performed field strength measurements on this date and determined that the transmissions exceeded the limits for operation under part 15 of the Commission's rules.²¹ A review of Commission records does not reveal an authorization for any FM broadcast station to operate at or near the Coit Street Site at any time relevant to the violation discussed in this NAL.

7. Evidence uncovered by the Agents—including an on-air recording of the Station announcing Bekune as the host of the Station;²² a sign at the Coit Street Site naming Bekune and advertising Powerhouse Radio on 98.5 FM;²³ information on the Station's website identifying Bekune as

¹⁴ See January 21, 2025 and November 14, 2024 Photographs of a sign posted on the fence at the Coit Street site (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287).

¹⁵ See, e.g., Sunday Service @10am on 06.09.24: DEFENSE by Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6apSKqjB7w&t=1473s> (June 9, 2024); Sunday Service @10am, 12.08.24: DEPOSITING INTO YOUR HEAVENLY ACCOUNT by Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLS2eaE9hJ0> (Dec. 8, 2024); Sunday Service @10am on 04.06.25: THE WILL OF THE FATHER by Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FhPBXX7bes> (Apr. 6, 2025) (stating "please join us every day @8am on Powerhouse Radio 98.5FM").

¹⁶ See Prayers For The World With Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EusvIakYdw&> (Mar. 5, 2022).

¹⁷ See Powerhouse Radio (The Station of Divine Emancipation), <https://us6freenew.radiostream321.com/> (last visited Apr. 8, 2025).

¹⁸ See A Short Interview with The Founder and General Overseer of Powerhouse of Faith International Ministries (The House Of Divine Emancipation), Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune By Sis. Sherrilee, *Facebook*, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=200550161483939 (Mar. 30, 2021); Facebook video of An Interview w/Rev. Prophet Robert Bekune (Mar. 30, 2021) (on file in EB-FIELDNER-24-00036287).

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ 47 U.S.C. § 511.

²¹ See 47 CFR § 15.239(b); *supra* para. 4.

²² See *supra* para. 4.

²³ See *supra* paras. 3-4. According to carrier records, the phone number (862-772-41{[]}) identified on the large sign outside the Coit Street Site advertising Powerhouse Radio 98.5 FM is assigned to Robert Bekune. Material that is set off by double brackets {[]} is confidential and is redacted from the public version of this document.

the Station’s point of contact;²⁴ posts found on Bekune’s YouTube account that include multiple videos of him with a text crawl promoting daily broadcasts on 98.5 MHz;²⁵ as well as an interview with Bekune posted on social media during which he is identified as the CEO of Powerhouse Radio 98.5 FM²⁶—shows that Bekune is the operator of the Station and should be held individually liable.²⁷ Accordingly, the Commission finds that Bekune’s unlicensed broadcasting of Powerhouse Radio on January 21, 2025, constituted pirate radio broadcasting in apparent violation of section 511 of the Act.²⁸

8. Section 511 of the Act authorizes the Commission to impose a forfeiture against any person “who willfully and knowingly does or causes or suffers to be done any pirate radio broadcasting.”²⁹ In exercising our forfeiture authority, we consider the “nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violations and, with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and such other matters as justice may require.”³⁰ We may adjust a forfeiture downward for minor violations, good faith or voluntary disclosure, a history of overall compliance, or an inability to pay.³¹

9. Section 511 of the Act and section 1.80 of the Commission’s rules authorize enhanced penalties for pirate radio broadcasting.³² Under these sections, any person who willfully and knowingly does, causes or suffers to be done any pirate radio broadcasting shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$122,661 for each day during which the offense occurs, but not more than \$2,453,218 in total.³³

10. The primary intent of the PIRATE Act is to increase financial penalties for pirate radio broadcasting.³⁴ Accordingly, in 2023, the Commission established a base forfeiture of \$20,000 for pirate radio broadcasting,³⁵ which is twice the pre-PIRATE Act base forfeiture level. Consequently, for

²⁴ See *supra* para. 5.

²⁵ See *id.*

²⁶ See *id.*

²⁷ Although Bekune was the Chief Executive Officer of Powerhouse of Faith International Ministries, Inc. (Powerhouse), which was registered as a non-profit corporation with the state of New Jersey in 2012, New Jersey’s Department of Treasury revoked Powerhouse’s status as a corporation for “failure to pay annual reports” in 2014. See Standing Certificate, Powerhouse of Faith International Ministries A NJ Nonprofit Corporation, Certificate Number 6171662501 (on file EB-FIELDSCR-24-00036287). Accordingly, Bekune is apparently liable in his individual capacity because the conduct in question occurred after Powerhouse ceased to exist as a legal entity.

²⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 511(a), (h).

²⁹ 47 U.S.C. § 511(a).

³⁰ *Id.* § 503(b)(2)(E); 47 CFR § 1.80(b)(11).

³¹ 47 CFR § 1.80(b)(11); *see also The Commission’s Forfeiture Policy Statement and Amendment of Section 1.80 of the Rules to Incorporate the Forfeiture Guidelines*, Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 17087, 17101, para. 27 (1997) (*Forfeiture Policy Statement*), recons. denied, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 15 FCC Rcd 303 (1999).

³² 47 U.S.C. § 511; 47 CFR § 1.80(b)(6).

³³ See 47 CFR § 1.80(b)(6) (setting the current inflation adjusted statutory maximum for a violation of 47 U.S.C. § 511(a) at \$2,453,218 and of 47 U.S.C. § 511(b) at \$122,661); *Amendment of Section 1.80(b) of the Commission’s Rules, Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties to Reflect Inflation*, Order, 40 FCC Rcd 25 at Table 5 to Paragraph (b)(12)(ii) (EB Jan. 3, 2025); *see also* Annual Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties to Reflect Inflation, 90 Fed. Reg. 3710 (Jan. 15, 2025) (setting January 15, 2025, as the effective date for the increases).

³⁴ See S. Rep. No. 116-178, 1 (2019) (“The purpose of S. 1228, the Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement Act or PIRATE Act, is to increase the financial penalties for pirate radio broadcasting.”).

³⁵ The Commission first applied this base forfeiture amount in prior Notices of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture. *See, e.g., César Ayora and Luis Angel Ayora, Queens, New York*, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, 38 FCC Rcd 2562, 2569, para. 15 (2023), *aff’d*, Forfeiture Order, 38 FCC Rcd 9747 (2023); *Thomas Barnes, La Grande, Oregon*, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, 38 FCC Rcd 2554, 2558, para. 12 (2023), *aff’d*, Forfeiture Order, 38 FCC Rcd 9744 (2023).

Bekune's apparent willful and knowing violation of section 511 of the Act, we apply this base forfeiture amount, for a total proposed base forfeiture of \$20,000.³⁶

11. In applying the applicable statutory factors, we also consider whether there is any basis for a downward adjustment of the proposed forfeiture. We find none. After applying section 1.80 of the Commission's rules and the statutory factors, and consistent with the *Forfeiture Policy Statement*, Bekune is apparently liable for a proposed total monetary forfeiture of \$20,000.³⁷

IV. CONCLUSION

12. We have determined that Robert Bekune apparently willfully and knowingly did, caused, or suffered to be done pirate radio broadcasting in violation of section 511 of the Act on January 21, 2025. As such, Robert Bekune is apparently liable for a forfeiture of \$20,000.

V. ORDERING CLAUSE

13. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED** that, pursuant to section 511 of the Act, 47 U.S.C. § 511, and sections 0.111, 0.204, 0.311, and 1.80 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.111, 0.204, 0.311, 1.80, Robert Bekune is hereby **NOTIFIED** of this **APPARENT LIABILITY FOR A FORFEITURE** in the amount of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for willful and knowing violation of section 511 of the Act, 47 U.S.C. § 511.

14. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that, pursuant to section 1.80 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 1.80, within thirty (30) calendar days of the release date of this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, Robert Bekune **SHALL PAY** the full amount of the proposed forfeiture or **SHALL FILE** a written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture consistent with paragraph 17.

15. In order for Robert Bekune to pay the proposed forfeiture, he shall notify the Office of the Field Director at field@fcc.gov of his intent to pay, whereupon an invoice will be posted in the Commission's Registration System (CORES) at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>. Upon payment, Bekune shall send electronic notification of payment to the Office of the Field Director, Enforcement Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, at field@fcc.gov on the date said payment is made. Payment of the forfeiture must be made by credit card using CORES at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>, ACH (Automated Clearing House) debit from a bank account, or by wire transfer from a bank account. The Commission no longer accepts Civil Penalty payments by check or money order. Below are instructions that payors should follow based on the form of payment selected.³⁸

- Payment by wire transfer must be made to ABA Number 021030004, receiving bank TREAS/NYC, and Account Number 27000001. In the OBI field, enter the FRN(s) captioned above and the letters "FORF". In addition, a completed Form 159³⁹ or printed CORES form⁴⁰ must be faxed to the Federal Communications Commission at 202-418-2843 or e-mailed to RROGWireFaxes@fcc.gov on the same business day the wire transfer is initiated. Failure to provide all required information in Form 159 or CORES may result in payment not being recognized as having been received. When completing FCC Form 159 or CORES, enter the Account Number in block number 23A (call sign/other ID), enter the letters "FORF" in block

³⁶ See 47 U.S.C. § 511.

³⁷ Any entity that is a "Small Business Concern" as defined in the Small Business Act (Pub. L. 85-536, as amended) may avail itself of rights set forth in that Act, including rights set forth in 15 U.S.C. § 657, "Oversight of Regulatory Enforcement," in addition to other rights set forth herein.

³⁸ For questions regarding payment procedures, please contact the Financial Operations Group Help Desk by phone at 1-877-480-3201 (option #6).

³⁹ FCC Form 159 is accessible at <https://www.fcc.gov/licensing-databases/fees/fcc-remittance-advice-form-159>.

⁴⁰ Information completed using the Commission's Registration System (CORES) does not require the submission of an FCC Form 159. CORES is accessible at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>.

number 24A (payment type code), and enter in block number 11 the FRN(s) captioned above (Payor FRN).⁴¹ For additional detail and wire transfer instructions, go to <https://www.fcc.gov/licensing-databases/fees/wire-transfer>.

- Payment by credit card must be made by using CORES at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>. To pay by credit card, log in using the FCC Username associated to the FRN captioned above. If payment must be split across FRNs, complete this process for each FRN. Next, select “Manage Existing FRNs | FRN Financial | Bills & Fees” from the CORES Menu, then select FRN Financial and the view/make payments option next to the FRN. Select the “Open Bills” tab and find the bill number associated with the NAL Acct. No. The bill number is the NAL Acct. No. with the first two digits excluded (e.g., NAL 1912345678 would be associated with FCC Bill Number 12345678). After selecting the bill for payment, choose the “Pay by Credit Card” option. Please note that there is a \$24,999.99 limit on credit card transactions.
- Payment by ACH must be made by using CORES at <https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do>. To pay by ACH, log in using the FCC Username associated to the FRN captioned above. If payment must be split across FRNs, complete this process for each FRN. Next, select “Manage Existing FRNs | FRN Financial | Bills & Fees” on the CORES Menu, then select FRN Financial and the view/make payments option next to the FRN. Select the “Open Bills” tab and find the bill number associated with the NAL Acct. No. The bill number is the NAL Acct. No. with the first two digits excluded (e.g., NAL 1912345678 would be associated with FCC Bill Number 12345678). Finally, choose the “Pay from Bank Account” option. Please contact the appropriate financial institution to confirm the correct Routing Number and the correct account number from which payment will be made and verify with that financial institution that the designated account has authorization to accept ACH transactions.

16. Any request for making full payment over time under an installment plan should be sent to: Chief Financial Officer—Financial Operations, Federal Communications Commission, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20554.⁴² Questions regarding payment procedures should be directed to the Financial Operations Group Help Desk by phone, 1-877-480-3201, or by e-mail, ARINQUIRIES@fcc.gov.

17. The written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture, if any, must include a detailed factual statement supported by appropriate documentation and affidavits pursuant to sections 1.16 and 1.80(g)(3) of the Commission’s rules.⁴³ The written statement must be mailed to the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20554, ATTN: Enforcement Bureau – Office of the Field Director, and must include the NAL/Account Number referenced in the caption. The statement must also be e-mailed to the Office of the Field Director at field@fcc.gov.

18. The Commission will not consider reducing or canceling a forfeiture in response to a claim of inability to pay unless the petitioner submits the following documentation: (1) federal tax returns for the past three years; (2) financial statements for the past three years prepared according to generally accepted accounting practices; or (3) some other reliable and objective documentation that accurately reflects the petitioner’s current financial status.⁴⁴ Any claim of inability to pay must specifically identify the basis for the claim by reference to the financial documentation. Inability to pay, however, is only one of several factors that the Commission will consider in determining the appropriate forfeiture, and we

⁴¹ Instructions for completing the form may be obtained at <http://www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form159/159.pdf>.

⁴² See 47 CFR § 1.1914.

⁴³ *Id.* §§ 1.16, 1.80(g)(3).

⁴⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 503(b)(2)(E).

retain the discretion to decline reducing or canceling the forfeiture if other prongs of 47 U.S.C. § 503(b)(2)(E) support that result.⁴⁵

19. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture shall be sent by first-class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Robert Bekune at {[]} Prospect Avenue, Apt. {[]}, Hackensack, New Jersey 07602, and 149 Coit Street, Irvington, New Jersey 07111.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Patrick Webre
Acting Chief
Enforcement Bureau

⁴⁵ See, e.g., *Ocean Adrian Hinson, Surry County, North Carolina*, Forfeiture Order, 34 FCC Rcd 7619, 7621, para. 9 & n.21 (2019); *Vearl Pennington and Michael Williamson*, Forfeiture Order, 34 FCC Rcd 770, paras. 18-21 (2019); *Fabrice Polynice, Harold Sido and Veronise Sido, North Miami, Florida*, Forfeiture Order, 33 FCC Rcd 6852, 6860-62, paras. 21-25 (2018); *Adrian Abramovich, Marketing Strategy Leaders, Inc., and Marketing Leaders, Inc.*, Forfeiture Order, 33 FCC Rcd 4663, 4678-79, paras. 44-45 (2018); *Purple Communications, Inc.*, Forfeiture Order, 30 FCC Rcd 14892, 14903-04, paras. 32-33 (2015); *TV Max, Inc., et al.*, Forfeiture Order, 29 FCC Rcd 8648, 8661, para. 25 (2014).