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For Immediate Release

FCC PRESERVES LOCAL RADIO PROGRAMMING PROVIDED BY TV CHANNEL 6 LOW POWER TELEVISION STATIONS

WASHINGTON, July 20, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today voted to permit a limited number of low power television (LPTV) stations operating on TV channel 6 (TV6) to maintain their existing analog FM radio services (FM6 operations) on an ancillary or supplementary basis subject to specific operational rules and requirements. This action will provide communities the ability to continue listening to the programming they have come to rely on.

Since the 1980s, some TV6 LPTV stations have provided listeners local radio programming that could be picked up at the bottom of the FM dial, specifically on 87.7 MHz and 87.75 MHz. Because the TV6 band is directly adjacent to the FM band, it is accessible using standard FM receivers. Listeners have tuned to existing FM6 LPTV stations for foreign language, religious and sports programming, and emergency and public information, in addition to programming to support underserved populations including native Spanish speakers and immigrants. Following the July 2021 LPTV digital transition, newly digital LPTV stations operating on TV6 and providing this audio service were no longer able to reach their analog radio audience through their digital TV transmission.

The Report and Order finds that it is in the public interest to permit a limited group of 14 TV6 LPTV stations to continue to provide analog audio service on which listeners have come to rely and that can be operated on a non-interference basis. Preserving the long-time audio programming offered by these remaining stations aligns with the Commission's core principles guiding the digital transition—minimizing service disruptions. The Order also adopts technical rules and requirements governing how FM6 LPTV stations will be permitted to continue to operate in order to prevent interference to their own digital TV operations and adjacent channel FM radio stations, preserve their free over-the-air TV service, and ensure their FM6 operations continue to serve the public interest.

Finally, the Order declines to repurpose TV6 spectrum (82-88 MHz) for FM services in locations where it is not currently being used for television service and also declines to amend current TV6 interference rules at this time.

Action by the Commission July 20, 2023 by Report and Order (FCC 23-58). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Carr issuing separate statements.

MB Docket No. 03-185

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).