GEO BROADCAST SOLUTIONS

News Release

FCC Opens Comments for Petition To Allow OTA Radio Broadcasters to Air Geo-Targeted Programming

Rule Change Will Improve Radio's Ability to Compete in the Marketplace and Reach the Public with Localized Emergency Alerts, Advertising, Weather/Traffic, and News

CHICAGO, April 3, 2020 – The FCC is requesting comments on the petition filed by GeoBroadcast Solutions LLC on March 13 seeking a rule change that would permit radio broadcasters to air geo-targeted programming, including emergency alerts, news, and advertising on a voluntary basis. The technology, called ZoneCasting™, has been in development by GeoBroadcast Solutions since 2011.

Members of the public can go to https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express and enter proceeding number RM-11854 to file a comment of any type. The original filing can be found at https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10313759820502/GeoBroadcast%20Petition%20for%20Rulemaking%20%5BFINAL%5D.pdf. Comments are due by May 4.

"We encourage the radio industry, as well as emergency responders, and the small business community to show the FCC their support for this proposed rule change proposal, in order to improve the technology afforded to radio broadcasters and to provide services and communications for the public good," said Bill Hieatt, CTO of GeoBroadcast Solutions.

The rule GeoBroadcast seeks to change relates to FM boosters, and no changes to the FCC's rules regarding translators or interference are necessary. Radio is currently the only mass medium that cannot geo-target its content. The television industry gained the ability to geo-target in 2017 when the FCC adopted the Next-Gen TV standard — also known as ATSC 3.0 – at the urging of NAB.

Radio is currently the only mass medium that cannot geo-target its content. The ability for radio stations to add localized weather and traffic, news, emergency alerts, and advertising is beneficial to listeners, small businesses, and advertisers and would allow the industry to progress and remain competitive in the market.

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The specific proposed revision to 47 Code of Federal Regulation §74.1231 adds the following language:

> *The programming aired on the FM broadcast booster station must be "substantially similar" to that aired by its primary station. For purposes of this section, "substantially similar" means that the programming must be the same except for advertisements, promotions for upcoming programs, and enhanced capabilities including hyper-localized content (e.g., geo-targeted weather, targeted emergency alerts, and hyper-local news).*

Importantly, this geo-targeting technology relies on existing consumer radio receivers that are synchronized with FM booster radio stations and originate localized content and insert it at specific and limited times while otherwise retransmitting the primary station's signal. This technology, which would be optional for broadcasters, does not impact interference between neighboring stations and does not cause harmful self-interference.

According to a recently released joint study by BIA Advisory Services and Advertiser Perceptions, more than 90 percent of local retailers and two-thirds of national advertisers are poised to put more money into FM radio when geo-targeting becomes available.

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About GeoBroadcast Solutions LLC
GeoBroadcast Solutions was formed in 2011 to develop the ZoneCasting™ Geo-Targeting platform. This platform has been successfully tested under special FCC authorization. Geo-Targeted separation of the main channel audio of an FM radio station to its listeners allows the ability to split an FM signal into local "zones." Out of this development effort came MaxxCasting™, which increases signal quality, PPM watermark decoding, and allows geographic targeting and fencing of radio screen advertising. It is successfully deployed and operational in many markets and growing rapidly. Additional information is available at geobroadcastsolutions.com.

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