



Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2006-560

Ottawa, 28 September 2006

Ramanjeet Sivia, on behalf of a corporation to be incorporated
Montréal, Quebec

Application 2005-0932-5
Public Hearing at Edmonton, Alberta
19 June 2006

Digital radio undertaking in Montréal

*In this decision, the Commission **denies** an application for a stand-alone, ethnic digital radio programming undertaking to serve Montréal, Quebec.*

The application

1. The Commission received an application by Ramanjeet Sivia, on behalf of a corporation to be incorporated, (Sivia) for a broadcasting licence to operate a stand-alone, ethnic digital radio programming undertaking to serve Montréal, Quebec. The applicant proposed to operate the new radio undertaking from one of the three Canadian Broadcasting Corporation facilities located in Montréal at 1458.048 MHz (DRB channel 4) with an effective isotropic radiated power of 11,724 watts.
2. Sivia stated that not less than 90% of all programming broadcast by the proposed radio station would be in the Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and Tamil languages. The programming would be targeted to the Indian and Pakistani communities in Montréal.
3. Sivia further indicated that the proposed radio station would offer a minimum of 11 hours of news in each broadcast week, of which 80% would be produced locally. The international news broadcast on the proposed radio station would originate with third parties, particularly those located in India. The proposed radio station would air up to 31 hours of religious programming in each broadcast week, including services originating primarily from various temples. It would broadcast other spoken word programming focusing on the promotion of cultural diversity, education, and helping new immigrants to integrate into Canadian society.
4. Sivia projected that its proposed radio station would generate revenues of \$327,000 in the first year of operation, increasing to \$818,000 in its seventh year.

5. Sivia made commitments to devote a minimum of \$3,000 in each broadcast year to the Canadian Association of Ethnic Broadcasters, and to contribute an additional \$2,000 in each of the second and third broadcast years to a university that offers courses in radio and television broadcasting.

Interventions

6. The Commission did not receive any interventions in connection with this application.

Commission's analysis and determination

7. Because the applicant proposed to operate an ethnic service, the Commission considered Sivia's application in light of the policy provisions set out in *Ethnic Broadcasting Policy*, Public Notice CRTC 1999-117, 16 July 1999 (the Ethnic Policy). One of the key provisions of the Ethnic Policy is that ethnic radio stations are expected to serve a broad range of cultural groups in a variety of languages since the scarcity of frequencies may not permit the licensing of an over-the-air single-language service for each ethnic group in a given market. When dealing with applications for ethnic services, the Commission decides on the minimum number of distinct cultural groups that a station must serve on the basis of the demographics of the community, the services already available, and the degree of support shown by local community organizations.
8. In the present case, the applicant proposed to serve only two cultural groups in four third-languages; that is, languages other than French, English or an Aboriginal language. The applicant claimed that the significant cost of purchasing digital radio receivers prevented it from serving more cultural groups or providing programming in more languages.
9. Statistics Canada's 2001 census reported that speakers of Urdu, Tamil, Hindi and Punjabi in Montréal's central market area represent less than 1% of the population of that area of the city. Given the relatively small size of the potential audience and the requirement for listeners to acquire digital receivers, the Commission is not convinced that the applicant's financial projections would be feasible.
10. Furthermore, the Commission notes that issues relating to the technical standard for digital radio transmission are among the issues considered in the public process announced in *Review of the Commercial Radio Policy*, Broadcasting Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 2006-1, 13 January 2006. The Commission held a public hearing on these issues commencing 15 May 2006 in the National Capital Region. Given the uncertainty inherent to the digital radio band, the Commission concludes that it would be premature to license a stand-alone, digital ethnic radio station at this time.

11. In light of all of the above, the Commission **denies** the application by Ramanjeet Sivia, on behalf of a corporation to be incorporated, for a broadcasting licence to operate a stand-alone, ethnic digital radio programming undertaking to serve Montréal.
12. The Commission encourages Sivia to consult the ongoing public process relating to the Commission's review of commercial radio.

Secretary General

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