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For Immediate Release

**FCC EXPANDS AREA WHERE FM TRANSLATORS
REBROADCASTING AM RADIO STATIONS CAN BE LOCATED**
Action Gives AM Radio Stations More Flexibility to Better Serve Listeners

WASHINGTON, February 23, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today expanded the site locations where FM translators can rebroadcast AM radio stations. The amended rule provides greater flexibility for an AM station to place a rebroadcasting FM translator in a location where it will better serve its AM station’s listeners.

AM radio stations that want to improve their service area with a clearer signal can do so by using an FM translator, which receives the AM signal and re-broadcasts it on an FM frequency. This is particularly useful for the many AM stations forced to reduce their power at night, since the FM translator can operate at the same power 24 hours a day.

At issue is a current FCC rule that may make finding a location for these translators unnecessarily challenging. Under the old rule, an AM station could place a rebroadcasting FM translator either within its daytime service contour or within a 25-mile radius of its transmitter, whichever distance was less. The new rule allows the rebroadcasting FM translator to be located anywhere within the AM station’s daytime service contour or anywhere within a 25-mile radius of the transmitter, even if the contour extends farther than 25 miles from the transmitter.

The current rule proved too restrictive for some AM broadcasters, especially those whose transmitters were far from their communities of license. AM transmission systems require large amounts of land, and many AM broadcasters have been forced to relocate to sites far from the cities they serve, where land is available or affordable. The rule change today especially benefits these AM stations, and also helps other AM stations whose highly directionalized technical facilities currently limit the area where they can locate a cross-service FM translator.

The Commission first authorized AM stations to rebroadcast over FM translators in 2009. In 2016, two filing windows opened that enabled more than 1,000 AM stations to acquire and relocate FM translators to rebroadcast their signals. Because of these actions, nearly 2,000 FM translators are currently rebroadcasting AM station signals, allowing many AM stations previously forced to reduce or eliminate nighttime power to now provide 24-hour service to their communities.

Today’s *Order* furthers the Commission’s efforts to assist AM broadcasters in providing vital radio service to consumers throughout the country.

Action by the Commission February 23, 2017 by Second Report and Order (FCC 17-14). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn and O’Rielly approving. Chairman Pai and Commissioner Clyburn issuing separate statements.

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