

REPUBLIC ACT No. 7921

AN ACT GRANTING THE SUMOROY BROADCASTING CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING STATIONS IN REGION VIII (EASTERN VISAYAS)

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Nature and Scope of Franchise.* – Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to the Sumoroy Broadcasting Corporation, its successors or assigns, hereunder referred to as the grantee, a franchise to construct, establish, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in Region VIII with the corresponding technological auxiliaries or facilities, special broadcast and other broadcast distribution services and relay stations.

SEC. 2. *Manner of Operation of Stations or Facilities.* – The stations or facilities of the grantee shall be constructed and operated in a manner as will at most result only in the minimum interference on the wavelengths or frequencies of the existing stations or other stations which may be established by law without in any way diminishing its own right to use its selected wavelengths or frequencies and the quality of transmission or reception thereon as should maximize rendition of the grantee's services and/or the availability thereof.

SEC. 3. *Prior Approval of the National Telecommunications Commission.* – The grantee shall secure from the National Telecommunications Commission the appropriate permits and licenses for its stations and shall not use any frequency in the radio/television spectrum without having been authorized by the Commission. The Commission, however, shall not unreasonably withhold or delay the grant of any such authority.

SEC. 4. *Responsibility to the Public.* – The grantee shall provide reasonable public service time to enable the government, through the said broadcasting stations, to reach the population on important public issues; provide at all times sound and balanced programming; promote public participation such as in community programming; assist in the functions of public information and education; conform to the ethics of honest enterprise; and not use its stations for the broadcasting of obscene and indecent language, speech, act or scene, or for the dissemination of deliberately false information or willful misrepresentation to the detriment of the public interest, or to incite, encourage, or assist in subversive or treasonable acts.

SEC. 5. *Right of Government.* – The President of the Philippines, in times of rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster or disturbance of peace and order, may temporarily take over and operate the stations of the grantee, temporarily suspend the operation of any station in the interest of public safety, security and public welfare, or authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any agency of the government, upon due compensation to the grantee, for the use of said stations during the period when they shall be so operated.

SEC. 6. *Term of Franchise.* – This franchise shall be for a term of twenty-five (25) years from the date of effectivity of this Act, unless sooner revoked or cancelled. In the event the grantee fails to operate continuously for two (2) years, this franchise shall be deemed *ipso facto* revoked.

SEC. 7. *Acceptance and Compliance.* – Acceptance of this franchise shall be given in writing within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act. Refusal or failure to accept the franchise or to operate within the prescribed period shall render the franchise void.

SEC. 8. *Tax Provisions.* – The grantee, its successors or assigns, shall be liable to pay the same taxes on their real estate, buildings and personal property exclusive of this franchise, as other persons or corporations are now or hereafter may be required by law to pay. In addition thereto, the grantee, its successors or assigns, shall pay a franchise tax equivalent to three percent

(3%) of all gross receipts of the radio/television business transacted under this franchise by the grantee, its successors or assigns: *Provided*, That the grantee, its successors or assigns, shall continue to be liable for income taxes payable under Title II of the National Internal Revenue Code pursuant to Section 2 of Executive Order No. 72 unless the latter enactment is amended or repealed, in which case the amendment or repeal shall be applicable thereto.

The grantee shall file the return with and pay the tax due thereon to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue or his duly authorized representatives in accordance with the National Internal Revenue Code. The return shall be subject to audit by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

SEC. 9. *Self-regulation by and Undertaking of Grantee.* – The grantee shall not require any prior censorship in any speech, play, act or scene, or other matter to be broadcast or telecast from its stations: *Provided*, That the grantee, during any broadcast or telecast, shall cut off from the air any speech, play, act or scene, or other matter being broadcast or telecast if the tendency thereof is to propose and/or incite treason, rebellion or sedition, or the language used therein or the theme thereof is indecent or immoral, and willful failure to do so shall constitute a valid cause for the cancellation of this franchise.

SEC. 10. *Democratization of Ownership.* – In compliance with the constitutional mandate to democratize ownership of public utilities, the herein grantee shall make public offering through the stock exchanges of at least thirty percent (30%) of its common stock within a period of three (3) years from the date of effectivity of this Act: *Provided*, That no single person or entity shall be allowed to own more than five percent (5%) of the stock offerings.

SEC. 11. *Warranty in Favor of National and Local Governments.* – The grantee shall hold the national, provincial, and municipal governments of the Philippines harmless from all claims, accounts, demands or actions arising out of accidents or injuries, whether to property or to persons, caused by the construction or operation of the stations of the grantee.

SEC. 12. *Sale, Lease, Transfer, Usufruct, etc.* – The grantee shall not lease, transfer, grant the usufruct of, sell nor assign this franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder to any person, firm, company, corporation or entity, nor merge with any other corporation or entity without the prior approval of the Congress of the Philippines. Neither shall the controlling interest in the grantee be transferred, whether as a whole or in parts and whether simultaneously or contemporaneously, to any such person, firm, company, corporation or entity without the prior approval of the Congress of the Philippines. Any person or entity to which this franchise is validly sold, transferred or assigned shall be subject to all the same conditions, terms, restrictions, and limitations of this Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is held invalid, all the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

SEC. 14. *Repealability and Nonexclusivity Clauses.* – This franchise shall be subject to amendment, alteration, or repeal by the Congress of the Philippines when the public interest so requires and shall not be interpreted as an exclusive grant of the privileges herein provided for.

SEC. 15. *General Broadcast Policy Law.* – The grantee shall comply with and be subject to the provisions of a general broadcast policy law which Congress may hereafter enact.

SEC. 16. *Reportorial Requirement.* – The grantee shall submit an annual report to the Congress of the Philippines on its compliance with the terms and conditions of its franchise and on its operations within sixty (60) days from the end of every year.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved, February 24, 1995.