§ 73.3700 Channel sharing.

(a) Channel sharing generally. For purposes of this subsection, “reverse auction” shall mean the reverse auction set forth in section 6403(a) of the See Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. Subject to the provisions of this section, qualified television stations may voluntarily seek Commission approval to share a single six megahertz channel in conjunction with a proposal submitted in the reverse auction. Each station sharing a single channel shall continue to be licensed and operated separately, have its own call sign and be separately subject to all of the Commission’s obligations, rules, and policies.

(b) Basic qualifications. (1) Any full power television station or Class A television station permittee or licensee, as well as any applicant for an original construction permit may execute a channel sharing agreement to be considered in conjunction with the reverse auction.

(2) The party relinquishing spectrum pursuant to a channel sharing agreement must hold a license prior to the commencement of the reverse auction wherein its channel sharing agreement shall be considered.

(3) Channel sharing agreements shall contain a provision requiring that each channel sharing licensee shall retain spectrum usage rights adequate to ensure a sufficient amount of the shared channel capacity to allow it to provide at least one Standard Definition (SD) program stream at all times.

(4) Channel sharing is permissible between commercial and noncommercial educational television stations.

(5) Channel sharing is permissible between full power television stations, between Class A television stations and between full power and Class A television stations.

(c) Preservation of carriage rights. A broadcast television station that voluntarily relinquishes spectrum usage rights under this section in order to share a television channel and that possessed carriage rights under section 338, 614, or 615 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 338; 534; 535) on November 30, 2010, shall have, at its shared location, the carriage rights under such section that would apply to such station at such location if it were not sharing a channel.

[77 FR 30426, May 23, 2012]