

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9354, September 28, 2006]

**AN ACT GRANTING THE RADIO MARIA FOUNDATION, INC A
FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, ESTABLISH, OPERATE
AND MAINTAIN FOR RELIGIOUS AND NON-COMMERCIAL
PURPOSES RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

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 Radio Maria Foundations, Inc., hereunder referred to as the grantee, its successors or assigns, a franchise to construct, install, establish, operate and maintain for religious and non-commercial purposes and in the public interest, radio broadcasting stations in the Philippines, where frequencies are still available for radio broadcasting, through microwave, satellite or whatever means including the use of any new technologies in radio systems, with the corresponding technological auxiliaries and facilities, special broadcast and other program and 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 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 availability thereof. In no way shall the operations of the grantee, nor the radiated power of its stations or facilities, exceed that required to cover the area where it is allowed to operate.

SEC. 3. *Prior Approval of the National Telecommunications Commission.* – The grantee shall secure from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) the appropriate permits and licenses for the construction and operation of its stations and facilities and shall not use any frequency in the radio 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 adequate public service time to enable the government, through the said broadcasting stations or facilities, to reach the population on important public issues; provide at all times sound and balanced programming; assist in the functions of public information and education; conform to the ethics of honest enterprise; and not use its stations and facilities for the broadcasting of obscene and indecent language or speech, 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.* - A special right is hereby reserved to the President of the Philippines, in time of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster or disturbance of peace and order, to temporarily take over and operate the stations or facilities of the grantee, to temporarily suspend the operation of any station or facility in the interest of public safety, security and public welfare, or to 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 or facilities during the period when they shall be so operated. The radio spectrum is a finite resource that is part of the national patrimony and the use thereof is a privilege conferred upon the grantee by the Senate and may be withdrawn anytime after due process.

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. This franchise shall be deemed *ipso facto* revoked in the event the grantee fails to comply with any of the following conditions:

- a. Commence operations within one year from the approval of its operating permit or provisional authority by the NTC;
- b. Operate continuously for two years; and
- c. Commence operations within three years from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Acceptance and Compliance.* - Acceptance of this franchise shall be given in writing within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act. Upon giving such acceptance, the grantee shall exercise the privileges granted under this Act. Nonacceptance shall render the franchise void.

SEC. 8. *Bond.* - The grantee shall file a bond issued in favor of the NTC, which shall determine the amount, to guarantee the compliance with and fulfillment of the conditions under which this franchise is granted. If after three years from the date of the approval of its permit by the Commission, the grantee shall have fulfilled the same, the bond shall be cancelled by the Commission. Otherwise, the bond shall be forfeited in favor of the government and the franchise *ipso facto* revoked.

SEC. 9. *Self-regulation by and Undertaking of Grantee.* - The grantee shall not require any previous censorship of any speech or other matter to be broadcast from its stations: *Provided*, That the grantee, during any broadcast, shall cut off from the air the speech or other matter being broadcast 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. *Obligation of the Grantee.* - Any person aggrieved by any remark, report, statement, commentary or the like by broadcasters using the same facilities of the grantee shall have the right to reply in the same program or any other program the aggrieved party may choose.

SEC. 11. *Warranty in Favor of National and Local Governments.* - The grantee shall hold the national, provincial, city and municipal governments of the Philippines free from all claims, accounts, demands or actions arising out of accidents or injuries,