



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

September 4, 2019

WCNC-TV, Inc.
TEGNA, Inc.
8350 Broad Street, Suite 2000
Tysons, VA 22102

Re: Request for Extension of
Construction Permit
WCNC-TV, Charlotte, NC
Facility ID No. 32326
LMS File No. 0000080762

Dear Licensee,

On August 30, 2019, WCNC-TV, Inc. (Tegna) the licensee of Station WCNC-TV, Charlotte, North Carolina (WCNC or Station), filed the above captioned application, as amended, seeking an extension of the Station's construction permit expiration date and waiver of the 90-day construction permit extension filing deadline. For the reasons below, we grant Tegna's requests and extend WCNC's construction permit expiration date 180 days to March 9, 2020.

Background. Pursuant to Section 73.3700(b)(5) of the Commission's rules, a station may request a single extension of its construction permit deadline of up to 180 days to complete construction of its post-auction facility.¹ Grant of an extension of the construction permit deadline does not alter the deadline by which a station must cease operating on its pre-auction channel. A station anticipating the need for an extension must submit an extension application using FCC Form 2100, Schedule 337, not less than 90 days before the assigned construction permit deadline.² For Phase 5 stations, such application was due by June 10, 2019. The application must demonstrate that the station is unable to complete construction on time due to circumstances that were either unforeseeable or beyond the station's control.³ In addition, a waiver of the application filing deadline is appropriate where the particular facts would make strict compliance inconsistent with the public interest and deviation from the general rule would relieve hardship, promote equity, or produce a more effective implementation of overall policy on an individual basis.⁴

¹ See 47 CFR § 73.3700(b)(5). All subsequent requests for additional time to construct are subject to the Commission's tolling provisions, 47 CFR § 73.3598(b).

² 47 CFR § 73.3700(b)(5)(iv).

³ The *Incentive Auction R&O* provides examples of six circumstances that might justify an 180-day extension of a station's post-auction construction permit: (1) weather related delays; (2) delays in construction due to the unavailability of equipment or a tower crew; (3) tower lease disputes; (4) unusual technical challenges; or (5) delays caused by the need to obtain government approvals, such as land use or zoning approvals, or to observe competitive bidding requirements prior to purchasing equipment or services; and (6) financial hardship with sufficient supporting evidence. See *Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions*, GN Docket No. 12-268 et. al., Report and Order, 29 FCC Rcd 6567,6804-05, paras. 581-2 (2014) (*Incentive Auction R&O*); 47 CFR § 73.3700(b)(5)(ii) and (iii).

⁴ See *Northeast Cellular Telephone Co. v. FCC*, 897 F.2d 1164, 1166 (D.C. Cir. 1990) and *WAIT Radio v. FCC*, 418 F.2d 1153, 1159 (D.C. Cir. 1969), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 1072 (1972); 47 CFR § 1.3 (waiver for good cause shown).

WCNC was repacked from channel 22 to channel 24 and assigned to transition Phase 5, which originally had a phase completion date of September 6, 2019.⁵ All repacked stations for Phase 5 were issued a construction permit with an expiration date of September 6, 2019. On September 3, 2019, the Incentive Auction Task Force and the Media Bureau extended the phase completion date and the construction permit expiration date for Phase 5 stations to September 11, 2019.⁶ The Station pledges to cease operation on its pre-auction channel by the phase completion date and operate an interim facility on its post-auction channel while it completes construction of its permanent post-auction facilities.

Tegna states WCNC's new primary antenna has been mounted on top of the tower but none of the necessary transmission line has yet been run. Tegna was recently notified that the tower crew would need to depart Charlotte for several days to assist with a helicopter install in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Given the timing of this work interruption, Tegna states that it is not feasible to complete work on WCNC's primary antenna by the Phase 5 completion date. Tegna seeks a 180-day extension. Tegna also requests a waiver of the 90-day construction permit extension filing deadline arguing that it did not realize it would need an extension until after the filing deadline.

Discussion. Upon review of the facts and circumstances presented, we find Tegna's request to extend the construction permit deadline to construct WCNC's post-auction facility meets the requirements for a construction permit extension. Tegna has demonstrated that an extension is needed because of unexpected construction delays. We also find that grant of this extension request is not likely to negatively impact the overall transition schedule. WCNC will cease operations on its pre-auction channel by the Phase 5 completion date and will operate an interim facility on its post-auction channel. To the extent some viewers are unable to receive WCNC's signal while it operates its interim facility, we believe that Tegna has every incentive to ensure viewers are fully informed about the Station's transition plan. Finally, we find that waiver of the 90-day construction permit extension filing deadline is in the public interest and consistent with the Commission's general waiver standard because Tegna was unaware at the time an extension request was due that an extension would be needed.⁷

We remind Tegna that pursuant to the Spectrum Act, the Station is eligible for reimbursement from the TV Broadcast Relocation Fund (Fund) of costs "reasonably incurred . . . in order for the licensee to relocate its television service from one channel to the other."⁸ Additional expenses incurred, for instance, as a result of the grant of changes in the Station's transition plan that are not related to the post-incentive auction channel change, may not be reimbursable from the Fund.

The above facts considered, WCNC-TV, Inc.'s application for extension of construction permit expiration date **IS GRANTED**. The construction permit (LMS File No. 0000063810) for WCNC-TV, Charlotte, North Carolina, **IS EXTENDED 180 days to March 9, 2020**. Grant of this extension does not permit WCNC to recommence operation on its pre-auction channel after ceasing operation or after

⁵ See LMS File No. 0000080712.

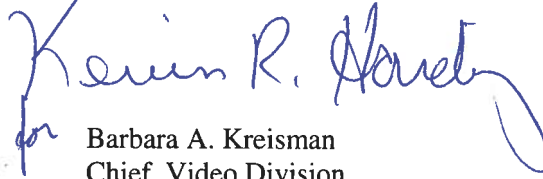
⁶ See *The Completion Date For Phase 4 of the Post-Incentive Auction Transition Is Extended To September 11, 2019 Because of Hurricane Dorian*, Public Notice, DA 19-866, rel. September 3, 2019 (IATF/MB).

⁷ See *supra* note 4.

⁸ See *Media Bureau Finalizes Reimbursement Form for Submission to OMB and Adopts Catalog of Expenses*, GN Docket No. 12-268, Public Notice, 30 FCC Rcd 11701, 11701-02 (MB 2015). See also Incentive Auction R&O, 29 FCC Rcd at 6821, para. 622 ("The appropriate scope of 'costs reasonably incurred' necessarily will have to be decided on a case-by-case basis.").

September 11, 2019, whichever occurs first. We also remind Tegna that any subsequent requests for extension of its construction permit deadline will be subject to the Commission's tolling provisions.⁹

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin R. Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "K" and a long, sweeping "y".

for Barbara A. Kreisman
Chief, Video Division
Media Bureau

cc (via electronic mail): Michael Beder, Esq.

⁹ See 47 CFR § 73.3700(b)(5)(i) (referencing 47 § CFR 73.3598(b)).