

Request for Extension of Construction Permit Deadline

Belo TV, Inc. and WWL-TV, Inc. (“Licensees”), licensees of WUPL(TV) and WWL-TV, respectively, both licensed to New Orleans, Louisiana (Facility IDs 13938 and 74192) (the “Stations”), hereby request a 180-day extension of the Stations’ construction permits for their main post-Incentive Auction facilities (File Nos. 0000074625 and 0000034692) (the “Main CPs”) – through July 15, 2020 – due to delays caused by technical challenges that required the Stations to alter the installation plan for the Stations’ shared post-Auction top-mount antenna.¹

Licensees both are wholly owned subsidiaries of TEGNA Inc. (“TEGNA”). WWL currently broadcasts from a tower owned by its Licensee, while WUPL currently broadcasts from a tower owned by American Tower. The permanent post-Auction facilities for both Stations will be located on WWL’s tower, with both Stations using a shared top-mount support pole. Licensees’ original plan was to install the new antennas and shared support pole using a helicopter lift. However, in November 2019 the Stations determined, in consultation with their engineering consultants, that the combined weight of the new antennas and associated support structure would be too great for a helicopter lift.² Additionally, the current top mounted antennas were attached to the tower using a welded sleeve to a bury mount. This mounting configuration eliminates a helicopter assisted removal. Instead, the new antennas and associated support pole will have to be installed using a more time-consuming gin pole installation. Licensees issued the necessary purchase orders to implement this revised installation plan in mid-November 2019. However, because of this change in the project scope, Licensees believe it is no longer feasible to complete construction of the Stations’ permanent post-Auction facilities prior to the Phase 7 deadline of January 17, 2020. In light of this delay, and the potential for further unforeseen setbacks, Licensees request a 180-day extension of the Main CPs’ construction deadline.

In the meantime, both Stations will cease operations on their pre-Auction channels and commence operation on their post-Auction channels by the Phase 7 deadline. WWL will make its transition using its completed side-mounted auxiliary antenna, while WUPL will make its transition using a side-mounted interim antenna. The Stations shortly will file appropriate applications for special temporary authority.

Because the Stations will timely cease operation on their pre-Auction channels, granting the requested extension of the Main CPs would have no effect on any party’s ability to complete its post-Auction transition. The extension thus would serve the public interest by facilitating the orderly completion of Stations’ main post-Auction facilities without impacting the broader repacking schedule.

¹ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.3700(b)(5)(ii)(D).

² To the extent necessary, Licensees thus requests that the Commission waive the requirement that requests for additional time to complete construction be filed at least 90 days in advance of the construction permit deadline, as Licensees learned of the need to change the installation plan less than 90 days in advance. See § 73.3700(b)(5)(iv). For the reasons set forth herein, grant of this waiver would serve the public interest by allowing the Stations to complete construction of their permanent post-Auction facilities in an orderly fashion, without affecting any other party’s repacking.