

## **Request for Extension of Special Temporary Authority**

TEGNA Broadcast Holdings, LLC (“Licensee”), licensee of WQAD-TV, Moline, IL (Facility ID 73319) (“WQAD”), hereby requests that WQAD’s special temporary authority to operate on its auxiliary antenna<sup>1</sup> be extended for 180 days – through January 11, 2021 – due to construction delays stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Licensee previously explained,<sup>2</sup> Licensee originally planned to install WQAD’s auxiliary antenna, primary antenna, transmission lines, and transmitter beginning in October 2019, but due to the large demand for tower crews, as well as weather-related delays, the tower crew was not able to arrive until December 2, 2019. The crew proceeded to install the station’s auxiliary antenna, and after further weather delays the auxiliary antenna installation and line sweep were completed as of December 12, 2019. However, the tower crew then informed Licensee that due to weather and other commitments, the crew would have to leave for another job before completing installation of WQAD’s primary antenna system. At that time, Licensee anticipated that in light of typical Midwest weather patterns, and the remaining work required to remove the station’s old main antenna and transmission line, it would not be feasible to complete the installation of WQAD’s new top-mount primary antenna until April 2020. The Commission accordingly extended the construction permit deadline for WQAD’s main post-Auction facility to July 15, 2020,<sup>3</sup> and granted the station an STA to transition to its post-Auction channel on an interim antenna.<sup>4</sup>

The tower crew was in fact scheduled to return to the site on April 24, 2020, to complete installation of WQAD’s primary antenna. However, due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the crew has not yet been able to begin this work. Specifically, the tower crew company hired by WQAD informed the station on or about June 8, 2020, that no crew would be able to begin work on the main facility until mid-July. In subsequent discussions, the company explained to Licensee that the pandemic prevented the tower crews from traveling or performing any installation work for more than two months, creating a substantial backlog of work, and that only a limited number of the company’s crews are qualified to perform the complex work required to install WQAD’s primary antenna, which will require replacing a section of the candelabra on the tower. The tower crew currently is scheduled to arrive at WQAD on or about July 6, 2020, and estimates it will require at least two weeks to complete the installation. As a result, it is no longer possible for WQAD to complete construction of the main facility by July 15.

Concurrently with this filing, Licensee is filing a request to toll the construction permit deadline for its main facility through January 11, 2021, given that construction has been delayed by factors beyond Licensee’s control stemming from the COVID-19 national emergency. Licensee hereby requests an extension of WQAD’s STA so that the station in the meantime may continue to serve viewers on its post-Auction interim facility. An extension of the STA would serve the public interest by maintaining service to the public and facilitating the orderly completion of WQAD’s main post-Auction facility. And because the station already has vacated its pre-Auction channel, the STA extension would not impact the broader repacking schedule.

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<sup>1</sup> See File No. 0000094070.

<sup>2</sup> See File No. 0000094071.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> See File No. 0000094070.