

WTCI(TV) – Request for Extension of Special Temporary Authority

LMS File No. 117523

South Carolina Educational TV Commission (“SCETV”), licensee of noncommercial educational TV station WNTV(TV), Greenville, South Carolina (“WNTV”), hereby respectfully requests six months of additional special temporary authority to operate from temporary facilities on its post-auction channel (LMS File No. 117523) until such time as the station is able to construct and license its permanent post-auction facilities. As set forth herein, WNTV has been unable to construct its permanent facilities due to rare and exceptional circumstances beyond its control and thus continued STA is necessary.

WNTV was assigned to transition from Channel 9 to Channel 8 in Phase 10 of the repack. WNTV’s transition plan calls for, among other things, replacement of the station’s transmitter and construction of a new tower for the station’s facilities.

A structural study conducted early in the repack process determined that WNTV’s existing tower, built in the 1980s, was inadequate to meet the applicable TIA-222-G building standard. In fact, the engineering firm conducting the study recommended that the tower be decommissioned and torn down. Upon learning this, SCETV decided to look into purchasing land adjacent to the existing tower and to construct a new tower for WNTV’s permanent post-repack facilities. SCETV had been in discussions to purchase the property since summer of 2017, but its efforts ran into numerous internal and external delays, from state government processes to staff turnover at SCETV. SCETV resolved all of the outstanding real estate issues earlier in 2020 and has been working to complete the design, permitting, and construction of the new tower. SCETV hopes to complete these efforts in 2021. As of the date of this request, the NEPA study begun in the summer of 2019 has been completed, as has the ASR registration process. Site engineering is expected to be completed this month, at which time focus will shift to selection of a tower design and local pre-construction permitting.

It is certain that the construction of WNTV’s permanent facilities will not occur before the December 30, 2020, expiration of WNTV’s construction permit and STA. By a separate filing, WNTV is requesting tolling of its repack construction permit. WNTV therefore requests an extension of its existing STA to allow it to provide continued service to its viewers pending construction of its permanent facilities.