

KUCB-LP, Dutch Harbor, Alaska
Facility ID No. 68756

REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF STATION LICENSE
REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT OF DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION PERMIT,
TOLLING EXTENSION AND WAIVER

Unalaska Community Broadcasters, Inc. (KUCB), licensee of noncommercial educational low power TV station KUCB-LP, Dutch Harbor, Alaska (the “Station”), respectfully requests a waiver of the Commission’s rules to (1) reinstate the Station’s license,¹ (2) reinstate the Station’s digital construction permit,² and (3) toll and extend the digital construction permit. KUCB also requests a waiver to allow for this late-filed request. Although KUCB hopes to have the Station’s digital facilities constructed in coordination with the current build-out of the State of Alaska’s digital facilities, out of an abundance of caution, KUCB hereby request a six month extension of the Station’s digital construction permit.

The Station serves rural Alaska and grant of this waiver would allow KUCB to restore the community’s sole television broadcast service. KUCB-LP is an NCE station serving its community of license, Dutch Harbor, Alaska, as well as Unalaska and the surrounding area of the Aleutian Islands. The location is where the Bering Sea meets the Pacific Ocean, at the terminus of the Alaska Marine Highway Dutch Harbor has no other local or regional broadcast video services, and the service area is hundreds of miles from the nearest broadcast television station that originates programming. Dutch Harbor is a commercial fishing port, with many people performing very dangerous work. It is subject to storms that can last a week, with seas ranging up to 50 feet and frequent storms with hurricane force winds during the winter. Accordingly, the Station plays a vital role in public safety broadcasting.

KUCB-LP exclusively provides locally produced programming including a daily Community Reader Board, local news (Inspired Unalaska and Flash! Unalaska), and City Council meetings. Additionally, Dutch Harbor and the adjacent Unalaska rely on KUCB-LP for local and regional weather alerts and to disseminate EAS information in this rural community.³

Because of the extreme remoteness (a western tip of the Aleutian Islands), limited communication, small population, and extreme weather, KUCB has continued to encounter construction delays that were beyond its control in its efforts to convert the Station to digital operations. As the Commission is aware, the State of Alaska’s primary digital transmitter vendor (EMCEE) filed for bankruptcy and unexpectedly ceased production. Although KUCB has remained committed to expend the necessary financial and human resources to complete the work needed, up until two weeks ago KUCB had been unable to locate a digital transmitter

¹ The Station’s analog facilities have been silent since on or around November 1, 2021 (*see* pending silent STA request LMS File No. 0000177461).

² See LMS File No. 0000149591 (Digital Flash But Construction Permit); LMS File No. 0000151054 (Extension of Construction Permit).

³ See State of Alaska EAS Plan on file with FCC. <https://www.fcc.gov/files/ak-eas-planpdf>.

suitable for the Station and KUCB had all but given up hope for returning the Station to service. Additionally, the Station does not have its own engineer on staff and it has been a daunting challenge to locate an engineer who is capable and willing to install the equipment since all qualified engineers have been uniquely focused on building out the digital television facilities for the State of Alaska's licenses.

The delays in locating a usable transmitter were in part due to supply chain and transportation issues that continue to be debilitated by the global pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on rural Alaska, not only because of its remoteness but also because travel was severely limited into vulnerable remote Alaskan villages.

KUCB failed to request a timely further extension of the Station's digital construction permit partly because it had given up hope for locating a transmitter but also partly because of pressing demands associated with maintaining KUCB operations during the pandemic, as well as a late October hurricane-level storm that devastated Unalaska, caused severe damage to KUCB's facilities, and all but destroyed the Station Manager's home.⁴

Accordingly, reinstating and extending KUCB-LP's digital construction permit would serve the public interest. KUCB remains committed to expending the necessary financial and human resources to complete the work and hereby pledges to construct and begin operating the Station as soon as possible.

⁴ <https://www.kucb.org/regional/2021-10-22/hurricane-level-winds-cause-widespread-damage-in-unalaska>.