

Request for Extension Of Special Temporary Authority

Puerto Rico Public Broadcasting Corporation (“PRPBC”), licensee of Station WIPM-DT, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico (“Station”), hereby requests an extension of the Special Temporary Authority to operate at reduced facilities (File No. 0000055290, as most recently extended by File No. 0000161417) (“STA”).

After the completion of the Incentive Auction, the Station timely filed a modification application for repacked facilities on Channel 32, as assigned by the Commission. However, before any construction could be completed, the Station’s tower and transmission facilities sustained damage due to Hurricane Maria, which made landfall on September 20, 2017. The purpose of this filing is to request Commission consent to extend the period during which the Station must operate with parameters at variance from its license.

PRPBC has taken substantive steps to restore the Station’s licensed facilities and to complete the construction of its post-Incentive Auction facility, but, due to reasons beyond the Station’s control, those efforts have been delayed. In particular, because the Station is on the same tower as Station WNJX, and due to the lack of certified tower riggers from the continental United States during the COVID-19 pandemic, construction was delayed for many months. Although Station WNJX has been able to complete its work and now operates with its post-Incentive Auction facility, unfortunately, the Station has been unable to complete its work due to circumstances beyond its control.

The Station’s main transmitter has been partially installed. However, the transmitter manufacturer (Comark) still needs to complete the installation. Once the installation is complete, PRPBC will have to undertake a proof of performance of the Station’s antenna. Comark has not provided PRPBC with a firm timeline to complete the installation work, although that company informally has advised PRPBC’s consulting engineer that it may be able to continue such work starting at the end of March 2022.

PRPBC’s consulting engineer recently conducted some preliminary work to test the performance of the Station’s antenna, and he believes that the transmission line may be causing some negative issues with respect to how the antenna is performing. Thus, it will be necessary for PRPBC to hire a tower rigger to open the transmission line. Once the tower rigger is hired (and PRPBC has been soliciting estimates for such work), PRPBC’s consulting engineer will be able to determine if the issues are as a result of the transmission line or the antenna.

As previously reported to the Commission, the Puerto Rico General Services Administration (“PRGSA”) is in control of the procurement and purchase procedures for PRPBC. Because any contract for services to PRPBC needs to be approved by the PRGSA, and PRPBC has no control over either the PRGSA approval process or over Comark’s work schedule, the rigger hiring, the transmission line test and final installation of the Station’s transmitter have not yet taken place due to circumstances beyond the control of PRPBC.

Based on the foregoing, and pursuant to the flexibility afforded by the FCC to Puerto

Rico licensees pursuant to the Public Notice, DA 18-901, dated August 30, 2018, following the damage sustained after Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in September 2017, PRPBC requests an extension of the STA to operate with reduced facilities. Although, by this request, PRPBC is requesting an additional six months to operate pursuant to the facilities set forth herein, PRPBC is hopeful that the Station will be able to commence operations pursuant to the terms of its “repack” construction permit before the end of that six-month period.

In summary, PRPBC is working as diligently as possible to resume operations with its post-Incentive Auction facility, but has faced insurmountable obstacles and delays that are out of its control. Grant of this request would be in the public interest because it will allow PRPBC to continue delivering the programming of the Station to viewers in Mayaguez and the surrounding areas without interruption.