

Request for STA to Operate on Channel 47 through Repack Phase 10

Marquee Broadcasting, Inc., licensee of WMDT, Salisbury, Maryland, Facility ID 16455 (the “Station”), hereby requests special temporary authority, due to circumstances beyond its control, in order to continue to operate with the Station’s pre-repack facilities while its post-repack facilities are completed. To the extent necessary, Marquee also requests waiver of the Commission’s rules. For the reasons set forth herein, Marquee respectfully requests reassignment from Phase 9 to Phase 10 and permission to continue to operate using its pre-repack facilities until the conclusion of Phase 10 on July 3, 2020.

The Station was originally assigned to transition from Channel 47 to Channel 29 as part of Phase 8 of the repack; on March 2 WMDT requested reassignment to Phase 9 due to weather-related delays preventing tower crews from meeting the original schedule necessary to transition by the end of Phase 8 (See File No. 0000106945). That request was granted on March 12. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Marquee now is forced to request further reassignment from Phase 9 to Phase 10. The state of Maryland has issued a “stay-at-home” order, severely limiting travel within the state. Due to the impacts of the pandemic, Marquee cannot ensure that crews would be able to safely travel to the Station’s transmission site to complete construction of the Station’s post-repack facility by May 1. Accordingly, and in accordance with the Media Bureau’s March 17, 2020 Public Notice (DA 20-282), Marquee hereby requests reassignment to Phase 10 and special temporary authority to continue to operate on the Station’s pre-repack channel 47.

WMDT currently operates on channel 47, which is not in the post-repack broadcast spectrum. Therefore, there are no downstream dependencies with respect to the Station’s transition and no other television stations are impacted by the station’s inability to meet the May 1, 2020 deadline.

MVPDs have been contacted in writing and via phone and/or email to notify them of the Station’s inability to change channels on April 9, 2020, as previously planned. Once Marquee is able to establish a firm date for its transition, MVPDs will be informed of that date as soon as possible.

Finally, the station has suspended its viewer education crawls and PSAs and intends to begin broadcast of revised educational crawls and PSAs as soon as possible when a date is available for the station’s transition. These informational insertions will inform viewers that, due circumstances beyond the station’s control, the rescan date has been moved.

For the reasons set forth herein, Marquee respectfully requests an STA to operate on its pre-repack facilities while construction is completed on its post-transition facilities. Grant of this request will not impact the repack of other stations and would serve the public interest because it would allow WMDT to continue to broadcast without disruption to the overall repack while it completes its post-transition facilities. Delay will further allow Marquee to complete its transition in compliance with requirements and advice of relevant authorities regarding preventing further spread of COVID-19.