

Request for Extension of Construction Permit

The instant Request for Extension of Construction Permit is filed by Saint Augustine's University ("SAU"), the licensee of WAUG-LD, Raleigh, NC, and permittee of the facility authorized in LMS File No. [0000054638](#).

SAU is a historically black university established in 1867 by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. It is a four-year liberal arts university located in Raleigh with an average enrollment of approximately 1,000 students.

WAUG-LD is silent, with Commission authority, as of August 29, 2019, as a result of being displaced during the repack. *See* LMS File Nos. [0000080862](#), [0000114708](#), [0000120875](#) and most recently in [0000136900](#).¹ SAU was operating its licensed digital facility prior to going silent August 29, 2019.²

SAU was granted a displacement construction permit for WAUG-LD on channel 4 in May 2018, but the permittee has not yet been able to build out the displacement facility due to a variety of circumstances outside its control. The displacement CP currently expires September 5, 2021.

SAU's explanation for the delays in construction are a matter of record with the Commission. Those reasons have been detailed in SAU's silent STA filings. *See* LMS File No. [0000120875](#) and [0000136900](#). A brief summary is provided below:

- The COVID-19 pandemic hit HBCUs such as SAU hard.³ SAU's financial resources and human resources capable of being dedicated to the displacement construction project have been under stress for nearly 18 months. Resources have been tight for discretionary projects. However, SAU was able to secure dedicated funding for the project through a limited budget line-item that allows SAU to incur displacement expenses, seek reimbursement from the LPTV displacement reimbursement fund, receive reimbursement and replenish the pool of money, and then incur new

¹ SAU is contemporaneously filing a request for extension of silent authority and for waiver of Section 312(g).

² For clarity, SAU did not miss the deadline to file an extension of time to convert to digital operations. *See Media Bureau Reminds Low Power Television and Television Translator Stations of July 13, 2021, Digital Transition Date*, Public Notice, DA 21-260 (rel. Mar. 4, 2021). Rather, SAU seeks additional time to construct its authorized displacement facility.

³ *See Challenges and Possibilities at HBCUs after the COVID-19 Pandemic*, available at <https://www.aaup.org/article/challenges-and-possibilities-hbcus-after-covid-19-pandemic#.YRVwZihKiM8> (last visited Aug. 12, 2021).

displacement expenses. The process has been working, but it takes longer than it would take if SAU had the funds to incur all expenses upfront.

- SAU's prior President, Irving McPhail, died in October 2020 after contracting COVID-19. For a period, University leadership necessarily needed to focus attention on keeping SAU running smoothly and managing the COVID-19 crisis while also beginning the search for a new President. The new President was appointed in February 2021.
- SAU experienced turnover in university staff responsible for WAUG-LD. The General Manager of WAUG-LD and radio station WAUG(AM) and an adjunct faculty member who had been involved in oversight of the project both departed at year-end 2020. It took time in the early part of 2021 to identify new personnel to oversee the construction project.
- In the early part of 2021, SAU struggled to identify a project management company willing and available to manage the displacement project. SAU was able to secure these project management services and fund a down payment as of approximately May 2021.
- Equipment and services are on order, but the COVID-19 pandemic has created supply chain delays and longer-than-normal lead times. However, as detailed in the contemporaneously filed silent STA extension request, substantial progress has been made to build out the facility, particularly since May/June 2021.

For good cause shown, SAU respectfully requests an additional six months to complete construction of the authorized channel 4 facility. Grant of this extension request is in the public interest and will allow SAU to return broadcast programming service of local interest to viewers in the Raleigh area and return a vital component of SAU's broadcast educational curriculum to its students and faculty.

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