



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

October 14, 2021

WUXP Licensee, LLC
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WUXP-TV, Nashville, TN
Facility ID No. 9971
LMS File No. 0000159944

Dear Licensee:

This letter is in reference to the above-captioned application for legal special temporary authority (Legal STA) filed by WUXP Licensee, LLC (Sinclair or Licensee), licensee of digital full power television station WUXP-TV, Nashville, Tennessee (WUXP or Station).¹ In its Legal STA, the Licensee requests authorization to allow WUXP's non-primary programming streams (multicast streams) to be aired in an ATSC 1.0 format on the facilities of WZTV(TV), Nashville, Tennessee (WZTV), licensed to WZTV Licensee, Inc. and WSMV-TV, Nashville, Tennessee (WSMV), licensed to Meredith Corporation (Meredith) (collectively, Multicast Hosts).² This arrangement between the Licensee and the Multicast Hosts have been entered into in connection with the Station's transition of its facilities to the ATSC 3.0 transmission standard. Although the Licensee has agreed to indemnify the Multicast Hosts from all liabilities or claims resulting from the airing of its multicast streams over the Multicast Hosts' facilities,³ it has requested the instant authorization to make clear that it will remain responsible from a statutory and regulatory perspective for the Station's multicast streams.⁴ Specifically, the Licensee requests that WUXP be treated as if it is still originating the multicast streams and be considered the responsible party

¹ Application of WUXP Licensee, LLC for DTV Legal Special Temporary Authority, LMS File No. 0000158707 (filed Sep. 22, 2021) (WUXP Application). The Licensee amended the WUXP Application on October 4, 2021.

² WKRN is licensed to operate on RF Channel 72, and WSMV is licensed to operate on RF Channel 10.

³ Sinclair Legal STA at 1.

⁴ Because WUXP and WZTV are both ultimately commonly owned by Sinclair they need not enter into any contractual indemnification or a written simulcast agreement with regards to the multicast stream to be aired on WZTV. See *Media Bureau Announces That It Will Begin Accepting Next Generation Television (ATSC 3.0) License Applications in the Commission's Licensing and Management System on May 28, 2019*, GN Docket No. 16-142, 34 FCC Rcd 3684, 3685, n.5 (MB 2019) (*May 2019 PN*) (not requiring commonly owned stations to enter into or maintain written simulcast agreements). Nonetheless, out of an abundance of caution, Sinclair requests that the instant legal authorization cover WUXP's multicast stream aired over the facilities of WZTV. We find this approach in the context of a station's non-primary multicast stream is consistent with our determination in the *May 2019 PN* regarding a primary simulcast hosting arrangement between commonly owned stations. However, our action herein is not intended to prejudge the outcome of any potential proceeding relating to any future licensing requirements regarding non-primary multicast streams. See *infra* note 28.

for compliance with any obligations under the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (Act) and the Commission's rules (Rules).⁵ For the reasons below, we grant the Licensee's request.

Background. On June 8, 2020, the Video Division granted the Station's application for modification of license to convert its existing broadcast facility to ATSC 3.0 transmission.⁶ As required by section 73.3801 of the Rules,⁷ the Station's primary stream (affiliated with *MyNetwork*) was simulcasted in an ATSC 1.0 format over the commonly owned facility of WZTV.⁸ In addition, in order to avoid the loss of the Station's over-the-air multicast programming to its current ATSC 1.0 viewers, the Station broadcasted a 1.0 version of its two non-primary multicast streams, *Comet TV* and *GetTV*, over WZTV's facility.⁹ On September 30, 2021, the Video Division granted the Station's application to change the host for the ATSC 1.0 primary simulcast from WZTV to WKRN-TV, Nashville, Tennessee (WKRN).¹⁰ The Station has also entered into a written agreement to broadcast *Comet TV* over the facilities of WSMV and to continue to broadcast *GetTV* over WZTV.¹¹ As part of the same arrangement, the Multicast Hosts have been provided capacity as ATSC 3.0 guest stations on the Station's facilities.¹²

As noted in the Legal STA, because of ATSC 1.0 capacity constraints, the Station is not able to air all of its multicast streams on the same channel as its primary ATSC 1.0 simulcast signal.¹³ Furthermore, due to capacity and other constraints the Station is not able to simulcast an ATSC 3.0 version of its multicast streams.¹⁴ Pursuant to an engineering study conducted by the Licensee, under this arrangements 97.5% of WUXP's current over-the-air ATSC 1.0 viewers will retain access to *GetTV* on

⁵ *Id.* See *Authorizing Permissive Use of the "Next Generation" Broadcast Television Standard*, GN Docket No. 16-142, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 32 FCC Rcd 9930, 9970-73, paras. 79-82 (2017) (*Next Gen TV Report and Order*) (requiring Next Gen TV broadcasters to comply with all Commission broadcast rules, including, but not limited to, the Rules regarding foreign ownership, political broadcasting, children's programming, equal employment opportunities, public inspection files, indecency, sponsorship identification, etc.).

⁶ Application of WUXP Licensee, LLC for Modification of License, LMS File No. 0000115726 (granted Jun. 8, 2021) (Sinclair License Initial Modification).

⁷ 47 CFR § 73.3801(b).

⁸ See Sinclair License Initial Modification at 1.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Application of WUXP Licensee, LLC for Modification of License, LMS File No. 0000159943 (granted Sept. 30, 2021) (Sinclair License Second Modification).

¹¹ Sinclair Legal STA at 1..

¹² See Application of WZTV Licensee, LLC, LMS File No. 0000115725 (granted Jun.8, 2020); Application of Meredith Corporation, LMS File No. 0000159733 (granted Sep. 30, 2012).

¹³ Sinclair Legal STA at 1. We also note that stations are not required to air their multicast channels as part of their ATSC 3.0 conversion. See *Next Gen TV Report and Order*, 32 FCC Rcd at 9937-38, para. 13, n.40 ("The provision of multicast channels is discretionary, and we decline to adopt rules requiring broadcasters who currently air such channels to continue to do so.").

¹⁴ Sinclair Legal STA at 1. Specifically, Licensee states that to air an ATSC 3.0 simulcast of the Station's non-primary multicast streams, the Station would not be able to accommodate current ATSC 3.0 guests as arranged. According to the Licensee, doing so also would impact the Station's ability to offer enhanced ATSC 3.0 offerings, such as High Dynamic Range, Wide Color Gamut and High Frame Rate, immersive and multiple audio channels, a dvanced emergency alerting, and non-real time interactive data delivery.

WZTV and 98.8% of WUXP's current over ATSC 1.0 viewers will retain access to *Comet TV*.¹⁵ Absent the proposed arrangements and grant of the instant request, the Licensee states that "all over-the-air viewers would lose access to WUXP(TV)'s multicast streams."¹⁶ The Licensee's engineering study also shows that its non-primary multicast streams will continue to serve the Station's Designated Market Area (DMA) and community of license.¹⁷

The Licensee goes on to state that it has provided the requisite notice to MVPDs regarding relocation of the Station's primary ATSC 1.0 stream and its non-primary multicast streams.¹⁸ The Station has also aired the requisite over-the-air announcements regarding its transition to the ATSC 3.0 standard and the need for over-the-air viewers to rescan their television sets to continue to receive WUXP's ATSC 1.0 programming streams.¹⁹ In order to alleviate any viewer confusion, the PSIP (virtual) channel for each of WUXP's programming streams will remain unchanged and will be identified to viewers as being associated with WUXP.²⁰ The Licensee plans to convert the Station's facilities to ATSC 3.0 and commence its ATSC 1.0 operations over the facilities of WUXP (primary stream), WSMV (*Comet TV*) and WZTV (*Get TV*) on October 14, 2021.²¹

Discussion. We conclude, based on the facts and circumstances presented, that the public interest would be served by the grant of the Licensee's Legal STA. Under the Commission's rules, Next Gen TV Broadcasters are not required to simulcast or continue airing their existing non-primary multicast streams.²² Grant of the instant Legal STA will promote the continued transmission of the Station's non-primary multicast programming streams in an ATSC 1.0 format to viewers and make clear that the Station is responsible for the content of those signals from a regulatory compliance and enforcement perspective. Therefore, for purposes of all statutory and regulatory obligations related to the Station's non-primary multicast streams, we will treat those signals as multicast streams being originated by the Station even though they are being transmitted over the Multicast Hosts' channels and facilities. The Station is the sole party responsible for ensuring compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements with regard to all of its original non-primary multicast streams. This includes, but is not limited to, our rules regarding political broadcasting, children's programming,²³ equal employment opportunities, public inspection files, indecency, sponsorship identification, station identification, contests, the CALM Act, and the Emergency Alert System.²⁴ Furthermore, because the Commission's rules do not require that a

¹⁵ *Id.* at 2 and Engineering Statement.

¹⁶ Sinclair Legal STA at 1.

¹⁷ Sinclair Legal STA, Engineering Statement.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 2. See 47 CFR § 73.3801(g) (Notice to MVPDs).

¹⁹ Sinclair Legal STA at 1-2. See 47 CFR § 73.3801(f) (Consumer Education for Next Gen TV stations).

²⁰ Sinclair Legal STA at 2.

²¹ *Id.* at 2.

²² *Supra* note 13.

²³ The Licensee notes in its Legal STA that "Licensee does not currently, and does not intend to, rely on its multicast streams for compliance with the Commission's Children's Television Programming requirements, as WUXP-TV averages at least three hours per week of core programming on its primary stream. As such, neither WUXP-TV's compliance with the Commission's Children's Television Programming requirements nor viewers' access to the station's required core programming will be affected by the continued use of WZTV(TV)'s facility and relocation of the Comet TV multicast signal to WSMV-TV's facilities." Sinclair Legal STA at 2.

²⁴ See *supra* note 5.

multicast stream be simulcasted, the Station need not air an ATSC 3.0 version of the ATSC 1.0 non-primary multicast streams being aired over the Multicast Hosts' facilities. For purposes of the instant Legal STA, we find compelling the capacity and engineering constraints that the Licensee has set forth.

Further, given that the current arrangement is temporary and is in furtherance of an ATSC 3.0 simulcasting arrangement, we will not apply the broadcast ownership rules to the extent that the arrangements would result in a potential violation of those rules. We find this approach is consistent with the Commission's decision and underlying basis to "not apply the broadcast ownership rules in any situation where airing an ATSC 3.0 signal or an ATSC 1.0 simulcast on a temporary host station's facility would result in a potential violation of those rules."²⁵

Accordingly, the application of WUXP Licensee, LLC, licensee of WUXP-TV, Nashville, Tennessee, **IS GRANTED** for a period of six months from date of this letter – hereby expiring on April 13, 2022. For purposes of the Act and the Commission's rules, we will consider the multicast program streams to be originated by the Station, even though the streams are being aired over the Multicast Host's facility and channels. Any change in the non-primary multicast streams being aired over the Multicast Hosts by the Station or relocating any of the non-primary multicast streams to a new ATSC 1.0 multicast host will require the filing of a new request. By this grant, the Licensee agrees to coordinate with MVPDs as necessary and ensure that impacted MVPDs continue to receive a good quality signal of the non-primary multicast streams over-the-air or via alternative delivery methods.²⁶ Because multicast signals are not entitled to mandatory carriage rights,²⁷ any impact on an MVPD's ability to carry WUXP's non-primary multicast streams pursuant to a retransmission consent agreement is subject to the terms of the private contractual relationships between WUXP and the affected MVPDs. Whether renewal is granted will be subject to any additional Commission or Bureau decisions on the treatment of multicast non-primary streams pursuant to an ATSC 3.0 simulcasting arrangement.²⁸

²⁵ *Next Gen TV Report and Order*, 32 FCC Rcd at 9972, para. 80, n.237. See also *Promoting Broadcast Internet Innovation through ATSC 3.0*, MB Docket No. 20-145, Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 5916, 5924, para. 15 (2020).

²⁶ Sinclair Legal STA at 2.

²⁷ See *Carriage of Digital Television Broadcast Signals: Amendment to Part 76 of the Commission's Rules*, CS Docket Nos. 98-120, 00-96 and 00-2, First Report and Order and FNPRM, 16 FCC Rcd 2598, 2621-22, para. 54 (2001); affirmed by *Carriage of Digital Television Broadcast Signals: Amendment to Part 76 of the Commission's Rules*, Second Report and Order and First Order on Reconsideration, CS Docket No. 98-120, 20 FCC Rcd 4516, 4518, para. 3 (2005) (*DTV Must-Carry Second R&O*) (declining to require cable systems to carry a licensee's multicast streams). In the *DTV Must-Carry Second R&O*, the Commission affirmed its decision in the First Report and Order to interpret the statutory term "primary video" to mean only a single programming stream. If a digital broadcaster elects to divide its digital spectrum into several separate programming streams, only one of these streams is entitled to mandatory carriage. *Id.* at 4530-37, paras. 28-44.

²⁸ We note that the Commission has before it a Petition for Declaratory Ruling and Rulemaking requesting that the Commission "(1) clarify that its existing rules permit a station transmitting in ATSC 3.0 to partner with one or more other stations that would host the first station's simulcasted ATSC 1.0 multicast streams to preserve existing service in the market; and (2) establish rules permitting a station transmitting in ATSC 3.0 to partner with one or more other stations that would host the first station's ATSC 1.0 multicast streams, regardless of whether those ATSC 1.0 multicast streams are simulcast in ATSC 3.0, and also permit a station transmitting in ATSC 1.0 to partner with one or more other stations to host content transmitted in ATSC 3.0." See Petition for Declaratory Ruling and Rulemaking of the National Association of Broadcasters, GN Docket No. 16-142 (filed Nov. 9, 2020) (Petition); *Media Bureau Seeks Comment on Petition for Declaratory Ruling and Petition for Rulemaking of the National*

Sincerely,

/s/

Barbara A. Kreisman
Chief, Video Division
Media Bureau

Cc (via electronic mail):

Joshua N. Pila
(Counsel for WSMV-TV)

Association of Broadcasters Seeking to Clarify Treatment of Multicast Streams Under the Next Gen TV Local Simulcasting Rules, GN Docket No. 16-142, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 13130 (MB 2020). Our action herein is not intended to prejudge the outcome of any potential proceeding undertaken in response to the Petition.