



Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

December 28, 2023

**Sent via Electronic Mail**

Board of Trustees, Michigan State University  
Shawn Turner  
General Manager and Director of Broadcasting  
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WKAR-TV, East Lansing, MI  
Facility ID No. 6104  
LMS File No. 0000215042

Dear Licensee:

This letter is in reference to the application for experimental special temporary authority (STA) filed by the Board of Trustees, Michigan State University (MSU), licensee of full power noncommercial educational (NCE) television station WKAR-TV, East Lansing, Michigan (Station or WKAR-TV). MSU requests STA to conduct experimental operations on channel 35.<sup>1</sup> For the reasons discussed below, we grant MSU's STA through June 11, 2024, subject to the conditions set forth below.

*Background.* In August 2018 MSU established the NextGen Media Innovation Lab (NMIL) in cooperation with the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University.<sup>2</sup> Since the facility became fully operational in January 2019, MSU has developed and tested new ATSC 3.0 applications, including in the areas of public safety and distance learning. MSU now seeks to pivot the NMIL to a new phase of experimentation with focus on supporting the creation of the Lansing School District NextGen TV Family Technology Center (NextGen TV Center). Through a grant provided from the United States Department of Education (DOE Grant), the NextGen TV Center will establish a comprehensive professional development program for teachers, and provide a scalable, tailored, NextGen TV learning management system for students and educators. In addition, MSU plans to expand NextGen education offerings into schools, community centers, libraries, and other areas where students gather. Prior experimentation conducted by MSU in the area of distance learning has focused on utilizing ATSC 3.0 to provide interactive educational resources to students in their classroom and at their homes. The STA will allow MSU to assess the ability of ATSC 3.0 to serve as a means to deliver teacher-generated content to students without easy access to broadband at "hub" locations.

According to MSU, because of the low power at which the NMIL would operate on Channel 35, the proposed facility will not cause more than 2 percent new interference to any LPTV facilities or more than 0.5 percent new interference to any other surrounding co-channel or adjacent channel facilities until such time as full power television WLMB(TV), Toledo, Ohio (WLMB), completes its change of channel

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<sup>1</sup> LMS File No. 0000215042 (STA).

<sup>2</sup> See LMS File Nos. 0000069316, 0000096961, 0000118359, and 0000160325.

from channel 5 to channel 35.<sup>3</sup> WLMB has agreed to provide MSU 45 days' advance notice prior to commencing operations on channel 35.<sup>4</sup> At that time MSU will request authority to shift its STA operations to channel 27. MSU provides an engineering statement in support of its technical analysis and states that it will comply with all Commission out-of-band emission requirements for full-service DTV stations through the use of a mask filter.

Recognizing that the NMIL has been operating since 2019, MSU states that it is actively engaged with other broadcasters in mid-Michigan communities to implement a permanent solution that will bring ATSC 3.0 to the Lansing area and to provide a permanently licensed home for the NMIL. Currently, beyond the NMIL, ATSC 3.0 is not being transmitted in the Lansing, Michigan Designated Market Area.

*Discussion.* We find that MSU stands ready to proceed with its definite program of research and that the public interest would be served by the grant of the STA. At this time we find that the efforts being undertaken by MSU are experimental in nature and given the unique facts and circumstances before us, requiring MSU to convert WKAR-TV to a licensed ATSC 3.0 facility would not be conducive to furthering the goals of the NMIL and its DOE Grant, and could negatively impact WKAR-TV's ability to continue serve the Station's ATSC 1.0 viewers and provide its existing NCE programming. We also find that the information obtained by MSU may be valuable to broadcasters, notably NCE broadcasters, with regards to the provision of new and innovative video and non-video broadcast services, notably with regards to distance learning.

Accordingly, pursuant to section 5.205 of the Rules,<sup>5</sup> the experimental authority requested by MSU for an experimental broadcast station on channel 35 **IS GRANTED** through June 11, 2024, subject to the provisions of Part 5, Subpart D, any commitments made by MSU in the application, and the following conditions.<sup>6</sup>

1. There is no expectation of renewal of this authorization. Any request for renewal must be submitted in accordance with the requirements of Part 5, Subpart D of the Commission's rules.
2. MSU is authorized to transmit a signal using the Next Generation TV transmission standard, as defined under 47 CFR § 73.682. Operation under this experimental authorization may not in any way impact the ATSC 1.0 operations of WKAR-TV, or the ability of existing viewers to obtain WKAR-TV's ATSC 1.0 over-the-air programming. MSU must also ensure that MVPD subscribers' access to WKAR-TV's programming is not interrupted, and MSU must continue to deliver a good quality ATSC 1.0 signal to all MVPDs.
3. Grant of the instant experimental authorization does not represent that WKAR-TV would be granted a license to transmit a signal pursuant to the ATSC 3.0 rules.<sup>7</sup> The Commission will consider that grant of such a license only if and when WKAR-TV chooses to convert its facility to ATSC 3.0.

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<sup>3</sup> See LMS File No. 0000185769. WLMB is licensed to Dominion Broadcasting Inc. Upon notification by WLMB that it will commence operations on channel 35, MSU must file a new STA.

<sup>4</sup> STA at Attachment 2 (Email from WLMB-TV 40).

<sup>5</sup> 47 CFR § 5.205.

<sup>6</sup> This action is being taken by the Video Division pursuant to the authority delegated to the Media Bureau under 47 CFR §§ 0.61, 0.283.

<sup>7</sup> See 47 CFR § 73.3801 *et. seq.*

4. If experimentation is to be discontinued prior to the authorization's expiration date, MSU must promptly notify the Video Division of the date it will be terminating its experimentation. Such notification must be sent within 10 business days via electronic mail to Kevin Harding at [Kevin.Harding@fcc.gov](mailto:Kevin.Harding@fcc.gov).
5. Pursuant section 5.203(d) of the Rules,<sup>8</sup> within 30 days of the conclusion of experimentation a report be filed with the Video Division containing the information required by section 5.207 of the Rules.<sup>9</sup> The report must be submitted to Kevin Harding electronic mail at [Kevin.Harding@fcc.gov](mailto:Kevin.Harding@fcc.gov). Alternatively, If MSU seeks extension of the STA it must attach the aforementioned report to any requests for extension of the STA.
6. Upon notification by WLMB of its intent to commence operations on channel 35, MSU must submit a new STA request specifying channel 27 for its operations, attach a copy of the notification received from WLMB, and provide the date which it will transition its operations from channel 35 to channel 27. Until such time, MSU is only permitted to operate on channel 35.
7. Any request for extension of this STA must include a description of all efforts being undertaken to identify a permanent licensed channel for MSU to operate the NMIL.
8. Any broadcaster equipment or end-user devices must receive (as applicable) the necessary Commission equipment authorizations prior to use.
9. This STA has been issued on a non-interference basis and may be immediately modified or terminated if the operation causes interference to any other licensed user, including but not limited to broadcast television or radio users, or if MSU fails to comply with any conditions of grant. Pursuant to section 73.1635(b) of the Rules,<sup>10</sup> the Video Division, without the consent of MSU, may also modify the terms of or terminate this authorization for any other reason upon written notice to MSU.

Sincerely,

/s/

Mark Colombo  
Associate Chief, Video Division  
Media Bureau

Cc: Jonathan Cohen, Esq. (Counsel for MSU)

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<sup>8</sup> 47 CFR § 5.203(d).

<sup>9</sup> 47 CFR § 5.207.

<sup>10</sup> 47 CFR § 73.1635(b).