



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

March 31, 2023

Backroads Radio, LLC
104 Pine Cone Pointe
Galax, VA 24333

Re: Backroads Radio, LLC
WKBA(AM), Vinton, VA
Fac. ID No.: 67180
Special Temporary Authority

Dear Applicant:

This is in reference to the request filed March 29, 2023, on behalf of Backroads Radio, LLC ("BRL"). BRL requests special temporary authority ("STA") to operate station WKBA(AM) with temporary non-directional facilities.¹

In support of the request, BRL states that tower #1 of its directional array is out of service and therefore the station is exploring options for a pattern change to non-directional from tower #2. Thus, an STA is requested for non-directional operation with a daytime power of 1 kilowatt.

Section 73.1680 of the Commission's rules provide for operation with emergency antenna facilities provided that an informal request for continued use of an emergency antenna is filed with the Commission within 24 hours. In particular, Section 73.1680(b)(1) states that AM stations may use a horizontal or vertical wire or a nondirectional vertical element of a directional antenna as an emergency antenna. AM stations using an emergency nondirectional antenna or a horizontal or vertical wire pursuant to this section, in lieu of authorized directional facilities, shall operate with power reduced to 25% or less of the nominal licensed power, or, a higher power, not exceeding licensed power, while insuring that the radiated field strength does not exceed that authorized in any given azimuth for the corresponding hours of directional operation.

Accordingly, the request for STA IS HEREBY GRANTED.² Station WKBA(AM) may operate non-directionally from tower #2 of its licensed directional array with a daytime power of 1 kilowatt. It will be necessary to further reduce or cease operation if complaints of interference are received. WKBA(AM) must use whatever means are necessary to protect workers and the public from exposure to radio frequency radiation in excess of the Commission's exposure guidelines. *See* 47 CFR § 1.1310.

This authority expires on **September 27, 2023**.

¹ WKBA(AM) is licensed for operation on 1550 kHz with a daytime-only power of 10 kilowatts, employing a directional antenna pattern (DAD-D).

² Periods of operation pursuant to this STA shall be recorded in the station's records (see 47 CFR § 73.1820). The records shall include start/stop dates and times of such operation. These log entries must be maintained for a minimum of two years as specified in 47 CFR § 73.1840(a), unless a longer retention period is requested by the staff. Periods of operation may be subject to independent verification that they in fact occurred.

STA Advisory: Section 309(f) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, authorizes the Commission to grant STA in cases of "extraordinary circumstances requiring temporary authorizations in the public interest and when delay in the institution of the temporary operations would seriously prejudice the public interest." However, Section 309(f) is not a means by which a licensee/permittee may circumvent established processing procedures which require the filing of an application, nor is it a means by which a broadcaster may enhance his facility or make operation more convenient for the broadcaster. Stations operating with less than licensed facilities under temporary authorities can be viewed as receiving the benefit of a larger protection area than that in which they are currently providing service.

Accordingly, Special Temporary Authorities by nature are to be temporary and are not intended for extended use. Licensees of stations operating under temporary authorities are reminded that timely restoration of permanent facilities is the responsibility of the licensee and should be undertaken expeditiously. Any request for extension of special temporary authorities carries an increased burden with each subsequent request.

Therefore, requests for extension of STA will be granted only where the licensee can show that one or more of the following criteria have been met:

- Restoration of licensed facilities is complete and testing is underway;
- Substantial progress has been made during the most recent STA period toward restoration of licensed operation; or
- No progress has been made during the most recent STA period for reasons clearly beyond the licensee's control, and the licensee has taken all possible steps to expeditiously resolve the problem.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jerome J. Manarchuck", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jerome J. Manarchuck
Audio Division
Media Bureau

cc: John Neely, Esq. (via email only)