

Media Bureau to Temporarily Lift the Freeze on Certain Television Modification Applications

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The Media Bureau announced today that it will soon provide an opportunity for Class A and full power television stations that were not assigned a new channel in the post-auction repack process (“Non-Repack Stations”) to file modification applications seeking changes in their service areas. In April 2013, the Bureau imposed a freeze on the filing of such modification applications so that the FCC could prepare for the Incentive Auction. Following the close of the ongoing Incentive Auction Second Filing Window for repacked stations (which closes November 2, 2017), the Bureau will announce a limited period during which the freeze will be lifted, thus allowing Non-Repack Stations an opportunity to file minor modification applications proposing facilities that change their service contours. Applications filed during this time will be accepted on a first come/first served basis, with the filing of an acceptable application cutting off the rights of subsequently filed applications.

The Bureau decided to temporarily lift the freeze to allow Non-Repack Stations an opportunity to modify and/or improve their signals before the Bureau opens a Special Displacement Window allowing low power and translator stations displaced in the repacking process to seek new channels. The Bureau’s decision is based on a concern that if the freeze is lifted after the Special Displacement Window, many LPTV or translator stations could be displaced again by a Non-Repack Station seeking to modify its facilities. The Bureau expects that by lifting the freeze for a limited period of time prior to the opening of the Special Displacement Window, it will create a more stable environment for a LPTV or translator station to find a new

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Practice Areas

Media

channel.

Applications filed once the freeze is lifted must protect applications filed during the repack process (including initial CP applications, and applications filed in the First Priority Window and Second Filing Window).