



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## BROADCAST AUXILIARY SERVICE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR DESIGNATED FOR THE 2020 NATIONAL POLITICAL CONVENTIONS AND THE 2021 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

By this Public Notice, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) and the Media Bureau (MB) respond to a request from the Chair of the ad hoc RF Spectrum and Frequency Coordinating Committee of the Network News Pool Organization (ElectionWireless2021)<sup>1</sup> to be designated as the single point of contact for coordinating Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) operations during the upcoming 2020 Republican National Convention (RNC), the Democratic National Convention (DNC), and the 2021 Presidential Inauguration.<sup>2</sup> In addition, we grant a waiver requested by ElectionWireless2021 to permit low-power auxiliary operators<sup>3</sup> to exceed the distance-separation requirement, as well as the related maximum power level, when operating at these events. This action is consistent with our designation of a BAS frequency coordinator for the 2016 National Political Conventions and 2017 Presidential Inauguration.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On April 2, 2020, ElectionWireless2021, an ad hoc frequency coordination group established by the broadcast networks, requested that Louis Libin, ElectionWireless2021's Chair, be designated as a special frequency coordinator and RF spectrum manager for the 2020 National Political Conventions. *See* Letter from Louis Libin, Chair, ElectionWireless2021, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission (filed Apr. 2, 2020) (ElectionWireless2021 Request). On June 29, 2020 ElectionWireless2021 amended the request to add additional locations as well as coverage for the 2021 Presidential Inauguration. *See* Letter from Louis Libin, Chair, ElectionWireless2021, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission (filed June 29, 2020) (ElectionWireless2021 Updated Request).

<sup>2</sup> ElectionWireless2021 also notes that the FCC recently granted requests for Special Temporary Authority (STAs) authorizing use of various spectrum bands to facilitate full coverage of the political conventions. ElectionWireless2021 Updated Request at 3 (citing Broad Comm Inc., Experimental Special Temporary Authorizations, Call Signs WQ9XQV, WQ9XQQ). According to the updated request, "[ElectionWireless2021] will soon request modifications of these STAs to reflect recent additions to both the DNC and RNC locations" and that "[a] future STA or STA modification request will also be prepared and filed to include the inauguration events once the technical details for that request have been finalized." *Id.* at 3-4. These upcoming requests, and others related to these 2020 National Political Conventions and 2021 Presidential Inauguration, will be addressed separately on a case-by-case basis.

<sup>3</sup> Low-power auxiliary operations are a subset of BAS operations.

<sup>4</sup> *See Auxiliary Broadcast Frequency Coordinator Designated for the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Presidential Inauguration in Washington, DC; Grant of Waiver of Separation Requirements of 47 C.F.R. § 74.802 and Special Temporary Authorizations*, Public Notice, 31 FCC Rcd 7305 (WTB & MB July 5, 2016) (available at <https://www.fcc.gov/document/bas-frequency-coordinator-designated-political-conventions>) (2016 BAS Coordinator Public Notice).

Political conventions and inaugurations attract extensive broadcast coverage and consequently require extensive use of wireless equipment.<sup>5</sup> The broadcast networks and other major content distributors require major wireless communications infrastructure, along with spectrum, to support their video and audio transmission.<sup>6</sup> For these events of major public importance, no one broadcaster holds the exclusive rights to broadcast or otherwise distribute this content.<sup>7</sup> ElectionWireless2021 states that its request is being filed with the consent of all domestic broadcasters, as well as the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties.<sup>8</sup> Under these circumstances, we find that appointment of Louis Libin as a special frequency coordinator would facilitate full coverage of these important events and would serve the public interest.

Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) stations, which are licensed under Part 74 of the Commission's rules, make it possible for television and radio stations as well as networks to transmit program material between various locations (e.g. from remote sites of breaking news stories or other live events to television studios, from studios to broadcasting transmitters for delivery to consumers, and between broadcast stations).<sup>9</sup> In addition to licensed BAS stations, Section 74.24 of the Commission's rules allows eligible broadcasters to operate BAS stations on a short-term basis, not to exceed 720 hours annually, without prior Commission authorization.<sup>10</sup>

In connection with major events such as the 2016 National Political Conventions and 2017 Presidential Inauguration, WTB and MB designated a BAS frequency coordinator and required prior coordination of all BAS operations, including operations pursuant to Section 74.24 of the Commission's rules.<sup>11</sup> We took these actions in response to our concern that uncoordinated use of BAS stations on a special temporary authority basis could result in spectrum congestion and harmful interference, which could result in less complete broadcast coverage.<sup>12</sup> We believe that the potential for a similar situation exists during the 2020 National Political Conventions and the 2021 Presidential Inauguration.

Accordingly, we designate ElectionWireless2021's Chair, Louis Libin, as the single point of contact for coordinating operations under Section 74.24 of the rules during the following time periods at the following locations: August 19–28, 2020 in Charlotte, North Carolina and August 19–31, 2020 in Jacksonville, Florida for the Republican National Convention, August 12–24, 2020 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the Democratic National Convention, and January 15–31, 2021 in Washington, D.C. for the Presidential Inauguration.<sup>13</sup> This designation will allow for advance coordination of terrestrial BAS frequency usage within a 100 kilometer radius, and within a 150 kilometer radius for any mobile operations aboard aircraft, around the following locations:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See ElectionWireless2021 Updated Request at 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 3. ElectionWireless2021 notes that government officials and public safety agencies also have extensive communications needs during these events. *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>9</sup> See 47 CFR § 74.531(a), 47 CFR § 74.631(a).

<sup>10</sup> See 47 CFR § 74.24(d).

<sup>11</sup> See generally 2016 BAS Coordinator Public Notice, 31 FCC Rcd 7305.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*, 31 FCC Rcd at 7306.

<sup>13</sup> This Public Notice will apply to any rescheduled dates and/or locations for these conventions.

<sup>14</sup> We remind licensees to consult FAA flight advisories for national special security events for airspace restrictions or other requirements.

- Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville, Florida;<sup>15</sup>
- Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina;<sup>16</sup>
- Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin;<sup>17</sup>
- Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin;<sup>18</sup>
- The United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.;<sup>19</sup> and
- The White House in Washington, D.C.<sup>20</sup>

All use of Part 74 frequencies for the 2020 National Political Conventions and the 2021 Presidential Inauguration, without exception, shall be coordinated in advance through the ElectionWireless2021 coordinator, Louis Libin.<sup>21</sup> Mr. Libin can be reached for the purposes of frequency coordination by phone or fax at (516) 374-6700 and by email at louislibin@broad-comm.com. Mr. Libin will provide assistance and database access to all local and non-local Part 74 licensees, as well as Part 78 and 101 licensees authorized to share spectrum available under Part 74 in the designated areas, for temporary fixed, mobile, and portable installations.

In addition to the operations discussed above, we note the potential use of unlicensed next-generation devices operating in TV white spaces. The Commission established a White Spaces (WS) database to provide licensed BAS, and other protected spectrum users, a means for protection from interference caused by the operation of these unlicensed devices. The WS database has been operational since March 1, 2013, so parties that desire to employ licensed, low-power auxiliary devices could register their operations with the WS database to ensure protection.<sup>22</sup> Registration in the WS database is only for protection from white space devices; the WS database does not provide coordination among BAS operations and is not a substitute for coordination through ElectionWireless2021.

ElectionWireless2021 also requests that the Commission grant a waiver of the distance-separation requirement of Section 74.802 of the Commission's rules, "to permit the use of low power auxiliary stations, not to exceed 2 watts of power – with most operations using power levels of 200 milliwatts or lower - on channels allocated for TV broadcasting where the nearest operating station is located at least 40 kilometers from the event locations . . . ."<sup>23</sup> ElectionWireless2021 states that it has worked

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<sup>15</sup> The center coordinates of the Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville, FL are 35-19-33N, 081-38-42W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>16</sup> The center coordinates of the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, NC are 35-13-30N, 080-50-21W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>17</sup> The center coordinates of the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, WI are 43-02-42N, 087-55-03W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>18</sup> The center coordinates of the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, WI are 43-02-23N, 87-55-02W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>19</sup> The center coordinates of the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. are 38-53-22N, 077-00-39W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>20</sup> The center coordinates of the White House in Washington, D.C. are 38-53-51N, 077-02-11W referenced to NAD83.

<sup>21</sup> This coordination requirement applies to BAS operators, as well as to providers of other radio services that are permitted to use Part 74 frequencies, who will be operating in the designated areas during the applicable time periods. The Commission's rules permit providers of cable television relay service and fixed microwave service to use Part 74 frequencies for temporary fixed, mobile, and portable installations. See 47 CFR § 78.18 and 47 CFR § 101.803(b).

<sup>22</sup> The only WS Database operator currently operational is Nominet -- <https://usa.wavedb.com/>.

<sup>23</sup> ElectionWireless2021 Updated Request at 4. Section 74.802 of the Commission's rules limits operation of low power auxiliary stations to locations at least 4 kilometers outside the protected contours of co-channel TV stations. 47 CFR § 74.802(b)(1). By seeking to operate at a maximum power level of 2 watts, the filing by

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cooperatively with the Network News Pool Organization and local broadcasters and that it has recently completed a detailed on-site RF spectrum analysis and related RF spectrum measurements at each venue.<sup>24</sup> In addition, ElectionWireless2021 commits to performing additional measurements at each venue before and during operations to help assure interference-free operations by quickly identifying and eliminating any problems that arise.<sup>25</sup> Given these planning measures and commitments, we do not anticipate that grant of the requested relief will result in harmful interference between low power auxiliary operations at the event sites and TV broadcasting operations. In addition, grant of the requested relief will facilitate full coverage of these events of national interest. We note that WTB and MB granted similar relief for the 2016 National Political Conventions and the 2017 Presidential Inauguration.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, we grant the requested relief.

For technical inquiries, please contact John Lambert, Broadband Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at (202) 418-2487 or John Kieffer, Engineering Division, Media Bureau, at (202) 418-2193. For press inquiries, please contact Cecilia Sulhoff of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-0587.

Action by Chiefs, Broadband Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Engineering Division, Media Bureau.

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ElectionWireless2021 also implicitly requests a waiver of Section 74.861 of the Commission's rules, which limits the power of low power auxiliary stations to 250 milliwatts in the bands allocated for TV broadcasting. 47 CFR § 74.861(e)(1)(ii). The references in this Public Notice to the "requested relief" include waiver of Section 74.802 and waiver of Section 74.861.

<sup>24</sup> ElectionWireless2021 Updated Request at 5.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> See 2016 BAS Coordinator Public Notice, 31 FCC Rcd at 7307.