

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
MORGAN COUNTY, INDIANA	)	File No. 0010920594
	)	
Request for Special Temporary Authority	)	

**ORDER**

**Adopted: March 22, 2024****Released: March 22, 2024**

By the Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau:

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. On February 13, 2024, Morgan County, Indiana (Morgan County, or the County), filed a request for Special Temporary Authority (STA)<sup>1</sup> to operate its Travelers' Information Station (TIS) at 100 watts, rather than 10 watts as limited by the Commission's rules.<sup>2</sup> Morgan County filed the request to expand the TIS signal's reach for a 15-day period, April 1 to April 15, 2024, to manage the expected influx of visitors, traffic congestion, and public safety surrounding the April 8, 2024 solar eclipse.<sup>3</sup> For the reasons set forth below, we grant Morgan County's STA request as conditioned herein.

**II. BACKGROUND**

2. The Commission authorized Travelers' Information Stations in 1977 to "establish an efficient means of communicating certain kinds of information to travelers over low power radio transmitters licensed to Local Government entities."<sup>4</sup> The Commission specifically noted that such stations had been used to reduce traffic congestion and to transmit "road conditions, travel restrictions, and weather forecasts to motorists."<sup>5</sup> Further, the Commission anticipated that such stations also would be used to "transmit travel related emergency messages concerning natural disasters (*e.g.*, forest fires, floods, etc.), traffic accidents and hazards, and related bulletins affecting the immediate welfare of citizens."<sup>6</sup> In 2013, the Commission modified the TIS rules to allow "ribbon" transmitters but emphasized that a TIS was only allowed to transmit "travel and emergency information that is relevant to travelers in the vicinity of each transmitter."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> File No. 0010920594 (filed Feb. 13, 2024), attached Request for Special Temporary Authority (Exhibit).

<sup>2</sup> 47 CFR § 90.242(b)(4)(iii).

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit at 1.

<sup>4</sup> *See Amendment of Parts 2 and 89 of the Rules to Provide for the Use of Frequencies 530, 1606, and 1612 kHz by Stations in the Local Government Radio Services for the Transmission of Certain Kinds of Information to the Traveling Public*, Docket No. 20509, *Report and Order*, 67 FCC 2d 917 (1977) (*TIS Report and Order*).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 917 para. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 922 para. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Travelers' Information Stations, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 28 FCC Rcd 11276, 11290, para. 41 (2013).

3. Morgan County operates a TIS transmitter in Martinsville, Indiana, call sign WQSI562, operating on 1700 kilohertz within the AM radio band.<sup>8</sup> The County states that “[b]ased on what occurred during the last solar eclipse which severely impacted our area, roads will gridlock with travelers and visitors for days before - and especially following - the event, which is on the afternoon of April 8, 2024. The line of totality traverses our immediate area. Our ability to dispatch EMS and public safety will be negatively impacted by the crush of vehicle traffic.”<sup>9</sup> The County states that “[w]e will use this radio system to advise the thousands who are in their vehicles – some of whom may be stranded - of safety procedures, directions and hazards specific to congestion which will result from the eclipse. Cellular communications may become overloaded, affecting motorists’ ability to reach out for help. If unexpected events occur, this radio system will be invaluable as a means to redirect motorists and apprise listeners of emergency procedures on the fly, and how to find assistance.”<sup>10</sup> The County contends that “[w]ith the currently-licensed 10 watts of transmitter output, we cannot cover adequately the extent of Interstate 69 and SR 67 which traverse our jurisdiction, not to mention the many surface roads which visitors and commuters will seek out to avoid the main thoroughfares when traffic comes to a stop. There are two-lane roads which more even more prone to congestion.”<sup>11</sup>

### III. DISCUSSION

4. Morgan County’s proposal would contravene three TIS rules and one other part 90 rule:

- Section 90.242(b)(4)(iii), which limits TIS transmitter output power to 10 watts.<sup>12</sup> Morgan County requests 100 watts.
- Section 90.242(b)(4)(i), which limits the TIS antenna height above ground level to 15.0 meters (49.2 feet).<sup>13</sup> Morgan County will a height of 22 meters.<sup>14</sup>
- Section 90.242(b)(4)(iv), which imposes a field strength limit of 2 millivolts per meter (mV/m) at a distance of 1.5 kilometers from the TIS transmitter antenna.<sup>15</sup> Morgan County requests 2.0 mV/m contour coverage at 5.5 miles (8.9 kilometers) radius from the antenna.<sup>16</sup>
- Section 90.203(a), which requires that each transmitter utilized for operation under part 90 of the Commission’s rules must be of a type which has been certified for use under this part.<sup>17</sup> The County proposes to use an ASPiSYS ASM100-100 AM transmitter.<sup>18</sup>

5. The Commission’s rules permit an STA to be granted for temporary, non-recurring service where a regular authorization is not appropriate.<sup>19</sup> Given that a total solar eclipse is relatively rare

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<sup>8</sup> Call Sign WQSI562.

<sup>9</sup> Exhibit at 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> 47 CFR § 90.242(b)(4)(iii).

<sup>13</sup> 47 CFR § 90.242(b)(4)(i).

<sup>14</sup> Morgan County has a waiver of 47 CFR § 90.242(b)(4)(i) to use a 22-meter antenna height on call sign WQSI562.

<sup>15</sup> 47 CFR § 90.242(b)(4)(iv).

<sup>16</sup> Exhibit at 2.

<sup>17</sup> 47 CFR § 90.203(a).

<sup>18</sup> Exhibit at 2, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> 47 CFR § 1.931(b)(2)(iv).

event for a particular location, and that the April 8, 2024 eclipse is expected to draw crowds and traffic gridlock to the path of totality,<sup>20</sup> which traverses Indiana, we find that the County meets the threshold for consideration of an non-recurring STA. Under the Commission's rules, STAs will be authorized on a secondary, non-interference basis.<sup>21</sup> Morgan County included an interference analysis, which concludes that the proposed facility using the STA power of 100 watts will cause no groundwave contour overlap to AM broadcast stations.<sup>22</sup> We agree with the County's analysis.

6. We find that the public interest would be served by granting an STA for a period of 15 days, from April 1 to April 15, 2024. We stress that conditional grant of this STA is solely intended to address Morgan County's need to manage the expected influx of visitors, traffic congestion, and public safety during the period surrounding the April 8, 2024 solar eclipse. The County must adhere to the Commission's TIS content and permissible communications limits.<sup>23</sup> Granting this STA does not prejudice the outcome of any pending or future request by Morgan County or any other party for an STA or permanent waiver seeking TIS operation with a power exceeding 10 watts.

7. For the foregoing reasons, we grant the County's STA request as conditioned below, in addition to standard STA special conditions:

- This Special Temporary Authority shall be authorized for the period beginning April 1, 2024 and ending April 15, 2024.

#### IV. ORDERING CLAUSES

8. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Sections 1, 4(i) and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 154(i), and 303(r), and Section 1.931 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR § 1.931, the Request for Special Temporary Authority filed by Morgan County, Indiana on February 13, 2024, IS GRANTED as conditioned herein.

9. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the application, File No. 0010920594, SHALL BE PROCESSED in accordance with this order.

10. This action is taken pursuant to delegated authority under Sections 0.191 and 0.392 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.191, 0.392.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

John A. Evanoff  
Chief, Policy and Licensing Division  
Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau

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<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Marcia Dunn, *Countdown begins for April's total solar eclipse. What to know about watch parties and safe viewing* (Mar. 8, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/total-solar-eclipse-april-2024-83164668ee08b0a0c92e1d2ac41e91aa> ("An estimated 44 million people live inside the 115-mile-wide (185-kilometer-wide) path of totality stretching from Mazatlán, Mexico to Newfoundland; about 32 million of them are in the U.S., guaranteeing jammed roads for the must-see celestial sensation.") .

<sup>21</sup> 47 CFR § 1.931(b)(1).

<sup>22</sup> Exhibit at 3-5.

<sup>23</sup> See 47 CFR §§ 90.242(a)(7), 90.405(a).