



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, DC 20554

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DA 26-541

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FCC'S MEDIA BUREAU ESTABLISHES PLEADING CYCLE AND EX PARTE PROCEDURES FOR THE EARLY RENEWAL APPLICATIONS OF THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY'S ABC LICENSES

MB Docket No. 26-131

Petition to Deny Date: June 29, 2026

Opposition Date: July 29, 2026

Reply Date: August 5, 2026

On April 28, 2026, the Video Division of the Media Bureau issued an Order directing The Walt Disney Company, its American Broadcasting Company, and its subsidiaries (collectively, Disney's ABC) to file license renewals for all of their licensed TV stations (ABC Stations).¹ On May 28, 2026, Disney's ABC filed renewal applications for its eight television licenses (ABC Stations).² By this Public Notice, we accept Disney's renewal applications for filing and announce procedures related to their consideration.³

The FCC licenses that the agency grants to broadcast TV stations like Disney's ABC authorize them to operate for 8 years.⁴ Generally speaking, upon expiration of their 8-year license term, broadcast TV stations are allowed to continue operating while the FCC determines whether or not to renew their license for another term of years.⁵ While none of Disney's ABC licenses would ordinarily be due for renewal until 2028, at the earliest,⁶ the FCC is permitted under section 73.3539 of its rules to call for the early renewal of licenses when the agency determines that doing so is essential to the proper conduct of an investigation.⁷ As stated in the *Early Renewal Order*, "the FCC has been investigating Disney's ABC stations for possible violations of the Communications Act of 1934 and the FCC's rules, including the agency's prohibition on unlawful discrimination."⁸ Specifically, the FCC has been investigating whether Disney's ABC engaged in prohibited practices by hiring, promoting, compensating, and/or providing

¹ *The Walt Disney Company et al.*, Order, DA 26-416 (MB Apr. 28, 2026) (*Early Renewal Order*).

² A list of the applications is included in the Appendix.

³ The license renewal applications referred to in this Public Notice have been accepted for filing upon initial review. The Commission reserves the right to return any application if, upon further examination, it is determined to be defective and not in conformance with the Commission's rules or policies.

⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 307(c)(1).

⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 307(c)(3).

⁶ The Commission staggers license expiration dates based on the state where the station is licensed. 47 CFR § 73.1020 (Station license period).

⁷ 47 CFR § 73.3539.

⁸ *Early Renewal Order* at para. 1.

workplace opportunities to people based on race, gender, or other protected characteristics in violation of federal nondiscrimination laws. In the course of conducting that investigation, the FCC determined that calling in Disney’s ABC licenses for early renewal was necessary to the proper conduct of that ongoing investigation.⁹ Calling the licenses in now for early renewal also provides the FCC the opportunity to determine whether the ABC Stations have been operating in the public interest, as required by their FCC licenses.¹⁰ As trustees of the nation’s airwaves,¹¹ broadcasters must operate in the public interest and, among other requirements, must maintain the character to hold a broadcast license.¹²

Standard of Review. Pursuant to section 309(k)(1) of the Act, the Commission shall grant an application for license renewal if it finds, “with respect to that station, during the preceding license term of its license,”¹³ the following:

- (A) the station has served the public interest, convenience, and necessity;
- (B) there have been no serious violations by the licensee of the Communications Act or the rules and regulations of the Commission; and
- (C) there have been no other violations by the licensee of the Communications Act or the rules and regulations of the Commission which, taken together, would constitute a pattern of abuse.¹⁴

If a broadcaster fails to meet these requirements, the FCC may move to either deny the application after notice and opportunity for hearing or grant it “on terms and conditions as are appropriate, a term less than the maximum otherwise permitted.”¹⁵

If, after notice and the opportunity for hearing, the FCC determines that a licensee has failed to meet the standard for renewal under section 309(k)(1) of the Act and that no mitigating factors justify the imposition of lesser sanctions, the FCC will issue an order denying a license renewal application and make the former licensee’s channel available to other interested parties.¹⁶ If the FCC determines, after a hearing, that a licensee has met the standard for renewal, the FCC will issue an order renewing the license.

⁹ *Id.* at 2.

¹⁰ *See, e.g.*, 47 U.S.C. §§ 303, 307(a), & 309(a); *FCC v. National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting*, 436 U.S. 775, 795 (1978) (stating that “the physical scarcity of broadcast frequencies, as well as problems of interference between broadcast signals, led Congress to delegate broad authority to the Commission to allocate broadcast licenses in the ‘public interest’”); *FCC Reminds Broadcasters of Their Public Interest Obligations*, Public Notice, DA 26-520 (MB May 28, 2026).

¹¹ *See Office of Communication of United Church of Christ v. FCC*, 707 F.2d 1413, 1427 (D.C. Cir. 1983) (“The clear intent of the Act was that the award of a broadcasting license should be a ‘public trust.’”).

¹² 47 U.S.C. § 308(b) (referencing character in the context of “[a]ll applications for station licenses, or modifications, or renewals thereof”); *Policy Regarding Character Qualifications In Broadcast Licensing Amendment of Rules of Broadcast Practice and Procedure Relating to Written Responses to Commission Inquiries and Making of Misrepresentations to the Commission by Permittees and Licensees*, Report, Order, and Policy Statement, 102 F.C.C.2d 1179 (1986 *Character Policy Statement*), recon. dismissed/denied, 1 FCC Rcd 421 (1986); *Policy Regarding Character Qualifications in Broadcast Licensing*, Policy Statement and Order, 5 FCC Rcd 3252 (1990) (1990 *Character Policy Statement*), modified, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 6 FCC Rcd 3448 (1991), further modified, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 7 FCC Rcd 6564 (1992).

¹³ 47 USC § 309(k)(1).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 309(k)(2). *See also* 47 U.S.C. § 307(c)(1) (Terms of Licenses – Initial and Renewal Licenses).

¹⁶ *See* 47 U.S.C. § 309(k)(3)(A)-(B). Pending the outcome of the proceeding the licenses continue to remain in effect. 47 U.S.C. § 307(c)(3).

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Ex Parte Status. In order to assure FCC staff's ability to discuss and obtain information needed to resolve the issues presented in this proceeding and pursuant to section 1.1200(a) of the Rules,¹⁷ we establish MB Docket No. 26-131 for this proceeding. The proceeding announced in this Public Notice shall be treated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding¹⁸ in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.¹⁹ Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation.²⁰ Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation.²¹ If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda, or other filings in the proceeding, then the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum.²² Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with section 1.1206(b) of the Rules.²³ Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.²⁴ We strongly urge parties to use the Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) to file *ex parte* submissions.²⁵ All *ex parte* filings must be clearly labeled as such and must reference MB Docket No. 26-131.

Petitions to Deny. Interested persons must file petitions to deny no later than June 29, 2026.²⁶ Oppositions to petitions to deny must be filed no later than July 29, 2026. Replies must be filed no later than August 5, 2026.²⁷ To the extent the reply deadline specified here provides for a shorter time period than provided as a general matter in the FCC's rules, we hereby waive that rule for good cause.²⁸

¹⁷ 47 CFR § 1.1200(a).

¹⁸ 47 CFR § 1.1206.

¹⁹ 47 CFR § 1.1200 *et seq.*

²⁰ 47 CFR § 1.1206(b)(2)(iii).

²¹ 47 CFR § 1.1206(b)(1).

²² *Id.*

²³ 47 CFR § 1.1206(b).

²⁴ 47 CFR § 1.1200 *et seq.*

²⁵ *See* 47 CFR § 1.1200(b)(2)(i).

²⁶ For purposes of filing a Petition to Deny against a license renewal application, the Commission's rules only establish a deadline in reference to "timely filed" and "not timely filed" applications. 47 CFR § 73.3516(e); *Media Bureau Announces June 18, 2026 Effective Date for Amendment of Parts 1, 73, 74, and 76 of the Commission's Rules to Update Rules Applicable to Broadcast Stations*, MB Docket No. 24-626 & GN Docket No. 25-133, DA 26-500 (MB May 19, 2026) (redesignating 47 CFR § 73.3516(e) as § 73.3584(f) effective June 18, 2026). In the absence of a specific rule governing the deadline for filing a petition to deny for an early license renewal, we rely on the requirements of the Act, which requires that interested parties be provided no less than thirty days to file and restricts grant of a license renewal application to no early than 30 days following the public notice announcing the application's acceptance of filing. 47 U.S.C. §§ 309(b) & (d). *See* 47 CFR § 1.939 (setting forth requirements for a petition to deny).

²⁷ 47 CFR § 73.3584(b) (establishing filing deadlines for oppositions and replies). *See* 47 CFR § 1.939 (setting forth filing requirements for oppositions and replies).

²⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 1.3.

Specifically, the FCC has determined that, in the context of this proceeding, replies, if any, can be prepared and filed within the timeframe specified here and the FCC's interest in moving efficiently in this matter to provide the licensees and stakeholders with certainty about the pleading cycle outweighs the interest in applying the general provision here. Persons and entities that properly file petitions to deny become parties to the proceeding and must be served in accordance with FCC rules.²⁹ To allow the Commission to consider fully all substantive issues regarding the applications in as timely and efficient a manner as possible, petitioners and objectors should raise all issues in their initial filings. Replies may only address matters raised in oppositions.³⁰

Filing Procedures. All filings concerning matters referenced in this Public Notice should refer to MB Docket No. 26-131, as well as the specific file numbers of the individual applications or other matters to which the filings pertain. Submissions in this proceeding must be filed electronically (i.e., through ECFS) or by filing paper copies.

- **Electronic Filers:** Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing. Filings can be sent by commercial overnight courier, first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail, or by hand delivery. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission and reference MB Docket No. 26-131.
 - Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
 - U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.
 - Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by the FCC's mailing contractor at 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes and boxes must be disposed of before entering the building.

Availability of Documents. Applications in this proceeding are available electronically through the Commission's Licensing and Management System (LMS) at the file numbers in the Attachment. All other documents (e.g., *ex parte* submissions, petitions to deny, oppositions, and replies) will be publicly available online through ECFS.

People with Disabilities. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

For further information, contact David Brown at (202) 418-1645 or Chris Robbins at (202) 418-0685. For press inquiries, contact Nancy Murphy at (202) 418-1043.

This action is taken by the Chief, Video Division, Media Bureau, pursuant to authority delegated by sections 0.61 and 0.283 of the Commission's Rules.³¹

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²⁹ 47 CFR § 1.47.

³⁰ 47 CFR § 1.45(c).

³¹ 47 CFR §§ 0.61 & 0.283.

Appendix

Fac ID	Call Sign	City	State	Application File No.
8620	KFSN-TV	Fresno	CA	0000298350
282	KABC-TV	Los Angeles	CA	0000298356
34470	KGO-TV	San Francisco	CA	0000298344
73226	WLS-TV	Chicago	IL	0000298337
1328	WABC-TV	New York	NY	0000298318
8617	WTVD	Durham	NC	0000298327
8616	WPVI-TV	Philadelphia	PA	0000298324
35675	KTRK-TV	Houston	TX	0000298353