

ALLEY THEATRE

Gregory Boyd, *Artistic Director*

Dean R. Gladden, *Managing Director*

October 12, 2017

Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Brendan Carr
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
c/o Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: ET Docket No. 14-165 and GN Docket Nos. 12-268 and 14-166 Via Electronic Filing

Dear Chairman Pai, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner O'Rielly, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Rosenworcel, and Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of the Alley Theatre, located in Houston, Texas, which provides approximately 400 performances per year to 200,000 audience members and education programs to 60,000 students, I write with concern about available spectrum and protection for our wireless microphones and backstage communications devices.

The Alley Theatre is one of the largest theatre companies outside of New York and is one of the flagship theatre companies in America. It is currently in its 70th year serving our community.

We strongly support the Commission's proposal to expand Part 74 license eligibility to include persons and organizations that can demonstrate the need for professional, high-quality audio and have the capability of providing it through conscientious use of wireless microphones. We support and endorse the Comments filed in these dockets by The Performing Arts Wireless Microphone Working Group.

Professional performing arts organizations hold thousands of performances each year, and wireless microphones are essential to producing high-quality performances while mitigating significant public safety concerns. Professional wireless capability, with successful interference protection, is essential to our sector.

We use the following wireless devices:

- Microphones: we own 26 transmitters and receivers.
- In-ear communications (IFBs): we own 8 receivers and transmitters.
- Cue and control devices: we own 16 transceivers.

- We have multiple controlling devices (not transmitting sound).

We typically use 15 to 40 wireless devices for each show and offer performances throughout the entire year that utilize these devices. We present 12+ productions along with dozens of additional events.

The following represents the bands and channels we use:

- VHF (channels 2–13, 54 MHz to 216 MHz): used, though not frequently
- Low UHF (channels 14–36, 470 to 608 MHz): always used; this is our most frequently used band
- High UHF (channels 38–51, the 600 MHz band, 614 MHz to 698 MHz): used, especially on rentals
- Outside the TV channels, we use Clearcom Cellcom at 1.7 GHz.

Our microphones can tune to more than one frequency. Their tuning ability is 60 to 70 MHz wide, with several different ranges. 28 of our wireless devices are digital, and 22 are analog. While we both own and rent, we typically use our own equipment. The life expectancy of equipment we own is 15 years.

It took us the better part of a year to move out of the 700 MHz band. We replaced our significant number of wireless devices when we absolutely had to because our 700 MHz units were still in good working order. Many of our auxiliary devices, like hand-held wireless and communications devices, were slowly phased out over the course of the year.

We have four experienced audio technicians with a Bachelor's and/or a Master's degree in Theatre and Sound, along with many years of experience with wireless audio devices. We also have affiliations with USITT, TSDCA, and AES.

I would urge the Commission to grant a Part 74 license if an applicant can provide certification of:

- A mission statement of providing performing arts to the public;
- A history of professional-quality wireless audio presentations to audiences without interference;
- Technical guidance and frequency coordination by qualified professionals (active in audio engineering who have academic degrees or equivalent professional experience and who are familiar with radio-frequency coordination);
- A commitment to register for protection only the frequencies, times, and locations actually needed; and
- A practice of keeping logs of all wireless microphone uses, including frequencies, for all performances.

I appreciate that the Commission has sought Public Comment on this very important issue. Professional performing arts organizations and educational institutions should have access to

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reliably available spectrum with interference protection. I would request that the Commission consider the burden already borne by the performing arts community in vacating the 700 MHz band. I am concerned about the cost of once again replacing my organization's sound equipment. Once that investment has been made, I would like some assurance that the system will work properly and without interference.

Performing arts organizations provide demonstrable service to the public in improving quality of life; preserving our cultural heritage; and providing education, enlightenment, and entertainment. They also contribute to local economies in every community across this country. I respectfully endorse the Commission's proposal to expand Part 74 LPAS rules to accommodate performing arts organizations and educational institutions that use fewer than 50 wireless microphones. The proposal is a much-needed solution that benefits the arts community and the public as well as the many new and emerging unlicensed white space technologies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean R. Gladden". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a prominent "R".

Dean R. Gladden
Managing Director