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Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band, GN Docket No. 18-122

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The recent announcement to reallocate an additional 100 megahertz of spectrum for U.S. commercial mobile services in the 3.45-3.55 GHz band is a welcome development in the race to 5G.¹ But the C-band remains a critical element of the U.S. plan to free more mid-band spectrum for the next generation of mobile connectivity. It is the largest swath of mid-band spectrum that is likely to be reallocated to support 5G for many years. The Commission should do everything in its power to complete the C-band auction and the transition as planned and on time, and not disturb the careful balancing and consideration it went through in adopting the C-band Order.

The Commission carefully constructed the C-band Order to ensure a smooth transition to clear spectrum for flexible use licensees, including, importantly, relocating incumbent operations while maintaining at least the same level of service for their customers.² Now, instead of focusing on the complex and crucial task at hand, Intelsat and others are re-litigating issues already thoroughly considered and decided by the Commission. In particular, despite being in line to collect relocation payments for agreeing to move operations on an accelerated timeline,³ Intelsat now requests changes that would slow the transition process and could ultimately affect 5G deployment.⁴ The Commission should deny these requests and remind Intelsat of its obligations to ensure a timely transition of its operations.

Of critical importance, Telemetry, Tracking, and Command (“TT&C”)/Gateway sites must be consolidated to the four locations selected by the satellite operators in the manner and timeframe set out by the Commission.⁵ As T-Mobile points out, operations at these consolidated

¹ “President Donald J. Trump is Unleashing America’s 5G Potential,” Fact Sheet, (rel. Aug. 10, 2020) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-unleashing-americas-5g-potential/>.

² See Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band, Report and Order and Proposed Modification, 35 FCC Rcd 2343 (2020) (“C-band Order”).

³ See C-band Order at ¶ 232.

⁴ Petition of Intelsat License LLC for Reconsideration, GN Docket No. 18-122, at 2-7 (May 26, 2020) (“Intelsat Petition”).

⁵ C-band Order at ¶¶ 373-389.



sites will enjoy significant protections for the next decade.⁶ But Intelsat’s requests to skirt the Commission’s rules⁷ threaten to derail the transition and delay access to mid-band spectrum critically needed for terrestrial mobile services.

First, Intelsat asks the Commission to reconsider protected use of the full 500 megahertz of C-band spectrum for international gateway operations at the consolidated TT&C/Gateway sites.⁸ The Commission provides protection for TT&C operations through December 5, 2030 at the four consolidated TT&C sites,⁹ but it rightly rejected calls for international gateway operations to be protected.¹⁰ Instead, it allows these operations to continue on an unprotected basis to preserve the ability for terrestrial mobile services in the area.¹¹ Intelsat provides no new arguments meriting reconsideration of that decision.

Next, Intelsat argues that if the Commission will not afford protection for the use of the full 500 megahertz of C-band at the consolidated TT&C/Gateway sites, then it should adopt new filtering criteria and a 20 MHz guard band around these sites.¹² These would be unnecessary new requirements added to a settled issue that the Commission resolved when it set out the parameters for TT&C/Gateway sites.¹³

The Commission found that there was no need for these types of drastic adjustments, which would be inconsistent with the goal of freeing C-band for 5G deployment in all corners of the country.¹⁴ Intelsat and terrestrial mobile operators agree that these requested changes could have negative consequences on terrestrial buildout – undermining the very reason for the

⁶ Letter from Steve B. Sharkey, T-Mobile, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, GN Docket No. 18-122, at 2 (filed July 28, 2020) (“T-Mobile Ex Parte”); *see also*, C-band Order at ¶ 376.

⁷ *See* Intelsat Petition; *see also*, Petition for Clarification and/or Reconsideration of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization, GN Docket No. 18-122, (filed May 26, 2020) (“ITSO Petition”); Comments of U.S. Electrodynamics, Inc. in support of the Intelsat License LLC Petition for Reconsideration, GN Docket No 18-122, (filed June 26, 2020) (“USEI Comments”).

⁸ *See* Intelsat Petition at 5-7.

⁹ C-band Order at ¶ 376.

¹⁰ *Id.* at ¶ 380 (“Extending interference protection to these operations, as requested by SES and C-band Alliance, could effectively preclude terrestrial operations across a wide geographic area near each TT&C facility across the entire 3.7-4.0 GHz band. This outcome would be inconsistent with the Commission’s goals for this proceeding and the transition plan detailed herein.”).

¹¹ *Id.* at ¶¶ 379-380.

¹² Intelsat Petition at 8-11.

¹³ C-band Order at ¶¶ 373-389.

¹⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 380.



Commission's work in this proceeding and undercutting the work to ensure continued 5G leadership globally.¹⁵

Finally, Intelsat asks the Commission to delay the deadline for relocating TT&C/Gateway operations by two full years, from December 2021 to December 2023.¹⁶ This unnecessary delay will affect network planning for new 5G services and slow the C-band transition. The December 2021 deadline adopted by the Commission provides sufficient time for TT&C operations to be relocated and new terrestrial mobile licensees are depending on the C-band transition moving forward as planned. The Commission has already fully considered these issues and provided avenues for a change in timing for some TT&C sites without affecting the entire transition.¹⁷ The Commission should avoid any delay in the considered and interdependent timeline for repurposing this critical band for 5G, and thus should reject Intelsat's untimely request.¹⁸

Reallocating C-band spectrum is critical to U.S. leadership in 5G. Intelsat's requests regarding TT&C/Gateway operations are unnecessary, and would be contrary to the public interest and the Commission's commitment to freeing C-band spectrum for 5G services as quickly as possible. The Commission already settled these issues; Intelsat's requests should be promptly denied.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Phillips".

cc: (by email)
Susan Crandall
Laura Phillips

¹⁵ See Consolidated Opposition of Eutelsat S.A. to Petitions for Reconsideration, GN Docket No. 18-122 at 2, (June 26, 2020) ("Eutelsat Opposition"); Opposition of AT&T, GN Docket No. 18-122 at 7 (June 26, 2020); CTIA Opposition to Petitions for Reconsideration, GN Docket No. 18-122 at 14 (June 26, 2020); Opposition of T-Mobile USA, Inc., GN Docket No. 18-122 at 14-15 (June 26, 2020) ("T-Mobile Opposition"); T-Mobile Ex Parte at 1, 3.

¹⁶ Intelsat Petition at 20-22.

¹⁷ C-band Order at ¶ 375 ("We may allow existing TT&C operations to continue in their current location beyond the December 5, 2021 deadline either through a waiver request upon a sufficient showing to the International Bureau or through negotiated agreements with affected 3.7 GHz Service licensees.").

¹⁸ See Verizon Opposition to Petitions for Reconsideration, GN Docket No. 18-122 at 7 (June 26, 2020).