

Sennheiser Electronic Corporation

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September 28, 2017
Via Electronic Filing

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

Re: MB Docket No. 15-146 and GN Docket No. 12-268;
GN Docket No. 14-166; ET Docket No. 14-165
Ex Parte filing of Sennheiser Electronic Corporation

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On September 26, 2017, on behalf of the broad community of wireless microphone owners and operators, Joe Ciaudelli, Sennheiser's Director of Spectrum Affairs, met with Jean Kiddoo, Hillary DeNigro, Charlie Meisch, Erin Griffith, and Sasha Javid of the Incentive Auction Task Force; Paul Murray, Hugh Van Tuyl, Martin Doczkat, Mark J. Columbo, Walter Johnston, and Julius Knapp of the Office of Engineering & Technology; and Kevin Harding and Barbara Kreisman of the Media Bureau. The primary topic was the importance for the Commission to adopt its proposal to reserve at least one UHF white space channel in each market. Also discussed was the importance of a smooth transition period.

1) A Vacant White Space Channel Should Be Set Aside

The Commission should ratify its proposal in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to reserve at least one UHF white space channel in each market, post auction repacking,

on a shared basis. This is necessary to maintain some balance of spectrum allocated between content distribution and content creation.

The UHF TV band, which spanned over 300 MHz prior to 2010, was shared between content distribution in the form of broadcast TV and content *creation* through use of wireless microphones (the definition includes a wide variety of wireless production devices) operated by licensed professionals. The 700 MHz reallocation a few years ago and the recent 600 MHz incentive auction shifted the distribution of content, from traditional broadcast TV to mobile broadband, but at the expense of spectrum available for content creation. This at time when demand for content creation has never been more robust. The industry already faced steep technical challenges to stage professional productions with the limited available spectrum *prior* to the incentive auction. The alternate frequency bands that have been opened to wireless microphones are helpful but do not compensate for the amount and quality of UHF spectrum that will be lost post auction repacking. Furthermore, caveats are attached to these alternate bands that preclude their use in some instances (e.g., approval process requiring significant lead time for operation in the 941.5-944 MHz and 1.4 GHz bands, as well as the restriction to non-itinerant applications in these bands).

Other points discussed:

- The United States is the global leader in content creation, which contributes over \$1 Trillion to our economy, is responsible for 5.5 million high paying jobs, and leads U.S. exported goods and services.¹
- The duplex gap and the guard band are not reliable enough to operate mission critical microphones.
- Licensed (FCC Part 74) professional production engineers require clean UHF in their spectrum “toolbox” for their hyper-critical wireless microphones. The proposed white space channel would be a vital tool, provided it could reliably be reserved by licensed professionals in the database system for interference protection from unlicensed devices.
- The prospect for unlicensed devices to use the channel when not required by licensed operators fulfills the Commission’s goals of spectrum sharing and efficiency.

2) Adherence to the Commencement of Service Rules are Vital for a Smooth Transition

The Commission has stated its intention of “providing an orderly transition process for secondary and unlicensed users that currently are serving consumer needs.”² The Commission

¹ Stephen E. Siwek, *Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy: The 2014 Report* (Economists Incorporated 2014). Available at <http://www.iipaweb.com/pdf/2014CpyrtRptFull.PDF>.

² *Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions*, Report and Order, 29 FCC Rcd 6567, 6834 at ¶ 655 (2014) (*Incentive Auction R&O*) and *Expanding the Economic and*

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only finalized several of the technical rules for wireless microphone equipment authorization post transition at their July 2017 Open Commission Meeting. As with development of any product, microphone or otherwise, it takes a couple of years for new products to get into the hands of customers after such rules are set. This underscores the importance for wireless service providers that plan to offer service before the July 13, 2020 transition deadline to truly meet the definition of commencement of service prior to registering use of their channels in the white space database system.

Sennheiser continues its commitment to fulfilling the Commission's transition goals. Sennheiser launched a campaign several years ago to educate the wireless microphone community on the forthcoming revised band plan and new regulations. Copies of its newly published *Guide to Wireless Microphone Operation Post FCC 600 MHz Incentive Auction* were provided at the meeting.

Please contact me with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Ciaudelli



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