

November 30, 2017

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

RE: Docket No. 10-213

Dear Madam Secretary:

The National Federation of the Blind appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Entertainment Software Association's (ESA) petition for waiver extension of the Federal Communications Commission's ("the Commission") rules requiring access to Advanced Communications Services (ACS) and equipment by people with disabilities.¹

First and foremost, in addition to this newest petition, which the ESA states will be the "final extension of the current waiver,"² the ESA has filed petitions for waivers in 2012,³ 2015,⁴ and 2016.⁵ As is plainly seen, this is the fourth waiver petition filed by the ESA over a period of six years regarding the topic of accessible ACS in video games. This repeated pattern of waiver extensions and the subsequent delay in access to ACS features in video games for people with disabilities is a distressing trend, and one that cannot be allowed to continue. The National Federation of the Blind would like to see the ESA follow through with their commitment to have this be the final request for an extension.

The National Federation of the Blind also acknowledges the strides the ESA has made in its commitment to accessibility in video gaming. Some of the innovations described in the petition⁶ are truly encouraging and inspire us to dream of a brighter future where the needs of every person, regardless of disability, can be fulfilled through the use of access technology. The ESA's demonstrated engagement with people with disabilities⁷ through gaming conventions and interactive panels is also reassuring because it further reinforces a commitment to understanding the needs of disabled players. We too are committed to creating a more accessible environment for blind video game enthusiasts, and as such the National Federation of the Blind is available to answer any questions the Entertainment Software Association may have regarding the needs of blind gamers.

¹ Petition of the Entertainment Software Association for Extension of Waiver, Docket No. 10-213 (October 27, 2017) (Petition).

² Petition, p. 26.

³ Petition of the Entertainment Software Association, Docket No. 10-213 (March 21, 2012).

⁴ Petition of the Entertainment Software Association for Partial Extension of Waiver, Docket No. 10-213 (May 22, 2015)

⁵ Petition for the Extension of Waiver of the Entertainment Software Association, Docket No. 10-213 (October 18, 2016).

⁶ Petition, pp. 12-18.

⁷ Petition, pp. 18-24.

In summary, the National Federation of the Blind, while cognizant of the progress the ESA and its member companies have made in the accessibility of ACS features in video games, respectfully requests that the Commission, if it were to grant the most current petition for waiver, does so with the explicit understanding that no further extensions be granted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Riccobono", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark A. Riccobono, President
National Federation of the Blind
200 East Wells Street
Baltimore, MD 21230