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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Amendment of Parts 15 and 90	)	
of the Commission's Rules to	)	
Provide Additional Frequencies	)	PR Docket No. 93-235
for Cordless Telephones	)	

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF THE
UTILITIES TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL

Pursuant to Section 1.415 of the Commission's Rules, the Utilities Telecommunications Council (UTC) hereby submits its comments with respect to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), 8 FCC Rcd 6782 (1993), released September 17, 1993, in the above captioned matter.[1/]

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

UTC is the national representative on communications matters for the nation's electric, gas, water, and steam utilities, and natural gas pipelines. Approximately 2,000 utilities and pipelines are members of UTC, ranging in size from large combination electric-gas-water utilities serving millions of customers to small gas distribution companies. UTC is also the

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[1/] By Order, DA 93-1318, released November 5, 1993, the Commission extended the comment and reply comment dates to December 8, 1993, and December 23, 1993, respectively.

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Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) certified frequency coordinator for the Power Radio Service. All utilities and pipelines depend upon reliable and secure communications facilities in carrying out their public service obligations. In order to meet these communications requirements, these companies operate extensive private land mobile radio systems.

II. ADDITIONAL CORDLESS TELEPHONE CHANNELS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOCATED FROM PRIVATE LAND MOBILE RADIO SPECTRUM

A. PLMR Spectrum is Inappropriate for Cordless Telephones

By this NPRM the Commission proposes to provide additional frequencies for the operation of cordless telephones. Specifically, the Commission proposes to reallocate 15 channel pairs using 30 frequencies near the 44 MHz and 49 MHz bands for use by cordless telephones on a Part 15 basis. These frequencies are currently allocated to services within the Private Land Mobile Radio Service. The proposal is in response to a "Petition for Rulemaking" filed by the Personal Communications Section of the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA). TIA maintains that the existing 10 pairs of channels allocated to cordless telephones in the 46 and 49 MHz bands have become exhausted in most urban areas of the country. Accordingly, the FCC proposes to allocate channels in the 44 and 49 MHz bands on a secondary, non-interference basis to cordless telephones in order to ease current congestion and to accommodate anticipated growth.

UTC opposes the proposed allocation, and as a general matter opposes any allocation of Private Land Mobile Spectrum for cordless telephones. In many areas of the country, spectrum for private radio requirements is in short supply and should not be further congested by the addition of non-private radio users. In particular, low-end mass market consumer devices, such as cordless telephones, should not be introduced into spectrum that has been set aside to meet the communications requirements of the nation's essential services.

Alternative frequency bands exist that can be used for cordless telephones. The 902-928 MHz and 2450 MHz frequencies are available for cordless telephone operation, and the recently reallocated unlicensed PCS spectrum in the 1890-1930 MHz band is also suitable for such devices. Accordingly, there is no justification for further burdening private radio spectrum.[2/]

Gas pipelines are currently licensed on these frequencies under the Petroleum Radio Service, as are a number of utilities that are licensed pursuant to intercategory sharing. Moreover, as part of the FCC's on-going "refarming" initiative these frequencies will be available for licensing to almost all private radio services. Accordingly, it is likely that the utilization

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[2/] Notice of Proposed Rulemaking GEN Docket No. 90-314, FCC 93-451, released October 22, 1993.

of these frequencies will dramatically increase in the future.[3/]

B. Cordless Telephones Would Cause and Be Susceptible to Interference

There is a risk of interference from the operation of cordless telephones to systems licensed on these frequencies. Potential interference is particularly accute in instances where the licensed base stations are located in residential areas, since such areas are likely to have the highest concentration of cordless telephone users. If the cordless telephone transmitter drifts off-frequency, and even with the FCC's suggested attenuation requirements, the cordless telephone could cause interference up to one mile away. Such potential interference is intolerable for pipeline and utility communications requirements. Further exacerbating this situation is the practical difficulty that private radio licensees would face in attempting to eliminate interference due to the unlicensed, itinerant nature of cordless telephone use.

Moreover, there is an even greater risk of interference to cordless telephones from private land mobile radio systems operating in the vicinity of cordless telephones. For example, private land mobile base stations operate at a much higher output level than cordless telephones, and there is a high probability that a private system could saturate a cordless telephone

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[3/] Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), 7 FCC Rcd 8105 (1992).

receiver operating near a fixed base station.

Even though under Part 15 Rules the operators of cordless telephones would have to accept any such interference, the reality is that consumers do not understand the nuances of FCC regulations, and few private system operators can afford to take a cavalier attitude regarding their systems' interference to the general public.

C. The FCC Should Adopt Specific Interference Avoidance Measures

If cordless telephones are allowed to operate on the proposed frequencies, the FCC must adopt specific requirements to avoid potential interference. To protect against interference to PLMR systems UTC supports a requirement that cordless telephones using these frequencies must incorporate an automatic channel selection mechanism which will prevent establishment of a link on an occupied frequency. To effectively avoid interference, automatic monitoring should take place prior to transmitter activation.

The Commission should also adopt measures to ensure frequency stability and avoid drift. Specifically, the FCC should increase the attenuation requirements for off-channel signals to at least -40 dB, and should require manufacturers to design their phones in a way that makes it difficult for end users to tamper with the power output levels.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission should reconsider its proposal. Allocation of spectrum from the Private Land Mobile Radio band for cordless telephones would not serve the public interest. There is already sufficient spectrum available in other bands for cordless telephones. The operation of cordless telephones on these frequencies would create the potential for unacceptable interference to critical systems licensed in this band, and Private Land Mobile Radio systems would inevitably interfere with cordless telephone operations.

If cordless telephones are allowed to operate on the proposed frequencies, the FCC must adopt specific requirements to avoid potential interference. Specifically, the FCC should require cordless telephones to have automatic monitoring capabilities, and should adopt stricter measures to ensure frequency stability.

WHEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Utilities Telecommunications Council respectfully requests the Commission to take actions consistent with the views expressed herein.

Respectfully submitted,

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