



BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MARIN ALSOP, MUSIC DIRECTOR

January 13, 2015

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

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

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

On behalf of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, located in Baltimore, MD, that provides approximately 150 performances a year to 350,000 audience members and education programs to 65,000 students, I write with concern about protection for our wireless microphones and backstage communications devices. Founded in 1916, the BSO's mission is to perform symphonic music of the highest quality that nurtures the human spirit and to enhance Maryland as a cultural center of interest, vitality, and importance. Under Music Director Marin Alsop, the BSO is committed to promoting accessibility, creating social change, and building community through music.

I understand the Commission has ruled that performing arts entities that regularly use 50 or more wireless devices will be eligible to apply for a Part 74 license. I've also learned that the FCC is seeking Comment on a proposed rule that would prevent performing arts entities using fewer than 50 wireless devices from participating in the database. This would leave my organization without any interference protection mechanism from the many TV Band Devices that may soon flood the market. Frequency coordination with other known wireless microphone users has become common practice, but there is no way to coordinate with TVBD's if you don't know about them.

Thousands of performances are held by professional performing arts organizations each year and the use of wireless microphones is both essential to producing high-quality performances and also mitigates against significant public safety concerns. Professional wireless capability, with successful interference protection, is essential to our sector.



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The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra utilizes microphones, in-ear communications, cue and control devices, and equipment controlling devices. Of these, we utilize anywhere between 1 and 60 units in a performance, depending on the scope of the production. Between BSO and non-BSO events, we offer approximately 150 presentations which require wireless devices. We utilize VHF, Low UHF, and High UHF. Our microphones are tuned to more than one frequency and the tuning ability is between 518 and 697. Our devices that are outside of the TV bands are wireless lighting, video cueing, and the audio system control. These devices use between 2.4 and 5 GHz frequency. Our mics, IEM, assisted listening devices, and wireless com is analog. We both rent and own wireless equipment. The life expectancy for the equipment that we own is between 3 and 5 years. We were required to purchase a new wireless system in order to move out of the 700 MHz band. This purchase cost the organization approximately \$20,000 and took one week to complete.

I appreciate that the Commission has sought Public Comment on these very important issues. Professional performing arts organizations should all have some sort of interference protection. While some entities will be protected by access to the geo-location database, many professional performing arts organizations will not under this plan. Further, 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 orchestra's sound equipment.

Performing arts organizations provide demonstrable service to the public in improving quality of life; preserving our cultural heritage; and in providing education, enlightenment, entertainment. They also contribute to local economies in every community across this country. I respectfully request that the Commission maintain access to interference protection and establish a mechanism to reimburse performing arts organizations for the cost of new equipment.

Sincerely,

Tabitha M. Pflieger
Director of Operations and Facilities