800 Concourse Parkway
Birmingham, AL 35244

May 31, 2016

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

Ms. Dortch:

I am a long time operational meteorologist in the broadcast field, and this comment concerns the potential “sharing” arrangements between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the wireless broadband industry in the frequency range of 1675-1680 MHz.

This sharing arrangement opens the door for interference, and potential disruption of real time satellite data to users in the weather enterprise. And this is data that is absolutely essential.

The weather enterprise is on the verge of acquiring a “game-changing” weather satellite, GOES-R. Scheduled to be launched in October, GOES-R boasts state-of-the-art technology, including vastly more spectral channels, increased resolution and rapid-scan capability. It will even be able to detect lightning.

Like the previous generation of GOES satellites, it will also provide monitoring capabilities for space weather. Coronal mass ejections and other space storms rightfully cause concern because they can completely disable global positioning-navigation systems, power grids and aviation communication and endanger passengers on high-altitude aircraft.

The fastest, most reliable way of receiving this data is a direct tap using the 1675-1680 MHZ band.

It is unthinkable to take away valuable frequencies required by GOES-R and the weather enterprise. We spend billions to protect our valuable communication infrastructure to support weather dissemination, and then we take capacity away?
In my state, on April 27, 2011, we had 62 tornadoes in a 24 hour period that killed 252 people. Without the excellent warnings that day, the death toll could have been over 500 easily. And, direct data from satellites were a crucial part in the warning process. Interference from terrestrial broadband signals would have cost lives that day.

Thank you for your willingness to hear my input on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

James Spann, CBM
Chief Meteorologist
WBMA-TV, Birmingham, AL