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June 7, 2016

Via Electronic Filing

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

Re: IB Docket No. 13-213 and RM-11685
Ex Parte Filing of the Hearing Industries Association

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On June 6, 2016, the undersigned and Andy Bopp, Executive Director of the Hearing Industries Association (“HIA”), met in separate meetings with Daudeline Meme, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Clyburn, and Johanna Thomas, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Rosenworcel. HIA made the following points:

The future of hearing aids (as well as most other FDA-regulated wireless medical devices) is in the 2.4 GHz band, using Bluetooth Low Energy (“LE”) and similar technologies. The public benefits are enormous: direct coupling with wireless handsets will allow for improved connections, may eliminate certain FCC requirements for wireless handsets such as hearing aid compatibility, and will allow people with hearing loss who use hearing aids to access new technologies as quickly and easily as other Americans. The forthcoming Bluetooth LE standard for hearing aids, as well as the “greying of America,” means that millions of new hearing aids will come into use on the 2.4 GHz band.

Wi-Fi Channel 14, on which Globalstar is seeking to build a network, has served as a “safe harbor” in the 2.4 GHz band for lower power unlicensed devices, including many frequency hoppers, hearing aids and wireless medical devices. The Commission must carefully consider the varying needs of all unlicensed users, including the large installed base, when making any decision that would change the operating conditions in an unlicensed band.

The proposal to allow Globalstar to conduct a trial deployment does not appear to do this. In particular, technical demonstrations have not addressed the availability of Bluetooth LE advertising channels or the potential impact on Bluetooth LE.¹ HIA supports smart spectrum

¹ See Letter from Mark Powell, Executive Director, Bluetooth SIG, Inc. to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, IB Docket No. 13-213 (filed June 2, 2013).

sharing, but that would require a reasonable assurance of access to key advertising channels, such as by defined time sharing. The Globalstar proposed order, as HIA understands it, does not take this into consideration.

Granting Globalstar conditional operational authority on the basis that other users would have to test against its deployment, also would not be prudent policy. Absent a clear understanding that the initial deployment would have the same set-up and technical characteristics as all future deployments, such testing may not prove accurate or useful. HIA engineers require detailed technical specifications, and information on all possible deployment scenarios, to model the potential impact on Bluetooth LE (and similar low power technologies) hearing aids. This would be the only way to make useful suggestions as to the service rules under which Globalstar could operate on Channel 14 with minimal impact to Bluetooth LE and other frequency hopping users of this *de factor* "safe harbor."

Please direct any questions to the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura A. Stefani
Counsel for The Hearing Industries Association

cc: Edward Smith
Johanna Thomas
Brendan Carr
Erin McGrath
Daudeline Meme