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COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

6/16/2000

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Mass Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
Room 2-C334
445 12th Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20554

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Re: *Request for Delay In MDS/ITFS Filing Window – MM Docket No. 97-217*

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am writing to express the vigorous opposition of the University of Arizona on behalf of the Arizona Board of Regents, the licensee of Instructional Television Fixed Service (“ITFS”) station WEH249, WHR621, WHR962, WHR963, WHR964, and WND274 Tucson, Arizona, to recent proposals to delay for as much as a nine months the initial filing window for applications by ITFS licensees for authority to make major modifications to their existing facilities or add response station hubs and high-power signal boosters.

It is now more than twenty months since the Commission adopted its *Report and Order* in MM Docket No. 97-217 allowing ITFS and Multipoint Distribution Service (“MDS”) licensees the flexibility to utilize their spectrum for a variety of exciting new applications, including high-speed, two-way broadband services. We applauded that decision when it was made, and have since looked forward to taking advantage of the new rules in conjunction with our commercial partner, Sprint Corporation, which is developing a broadband wireless network to serve the Tucson, Arizona region. The demand for broadband services in our region is growing at an exponential rate, and the Sprint system will go far to satisfy that demand among our students, our faculty and the community at large.

However, we understand that the commercial viability of Sprint’s system depends on its ability to enter the broadband marketplace soon -- before the Bell Operating Companies and cable operators gain even more of a head start than they already have. In other words, if Sprint is further delayed in its deployment of MDS/ITFS-based two-way broadband systems, its ability to succeed in the marketplace is placed at risk. That, in turn, could prove devastating to an ITFS licensee like us, who is looking forward to the benefits of two-way wireless broadband services but cannot possibly develop a system without the financial, technical and operational support of Sprint. While those who are seeking a delay would have the Commission believe that a postponement in the long-

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TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

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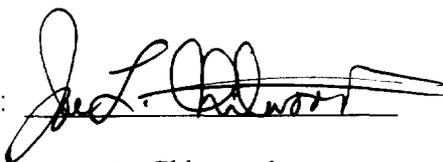
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awaited initial filing window benefits ITFS licensees, that simply is not correct; the University of Arizona could suffer substantial, irreparable harm if the filing window is postponed and Sprint's ability to succeed in the broadband marketplace jeopardized. A postponement of the filing window not only postpones the day that our students and faculty will be able to utilize the Sprint system, it threatens the financial underpinnings of that system.

In short, University of Arizona on the behalf of the Arizona board of Regents urges the Commission to place the public interest in the deployment of broadband services for commercial and educational applications ahead of the narrow commercial interests of those who are looking to delay the filing window.

Respectfully submitted,

KUAT Communications Group,
University of Arizona
on behalf of
the Arizona Board of Regents

By: 

Joe L. Chitwood
Assistant General Manager, VideoServices
KUAT Communications Group
University of Arizona
on behalf of the
Arizona Board of Regents

cc: Hon. William E. Kennard
Hon. Susan Ness
Hon. Harold W. Furchtgott-Roth
Hon. Michael K. Powell
Hon. Gloria Tristani
Roy Stewart
Barbara Kreisman