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May 27, 2005

Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WT Docket No. 96-86

To: Federal Communications Commission

The City of Sacramento has concerns about the proposal to require radios, using only the 700 MHz wideband general use channels, to be capable of operating on the interoperable channels as well. Although we support interoperability, we do not believe this specific requirement is reasonable or necessary. It is of even greater concern, because of the FCC's decision to adopt the SAM (Scalable Adaptive Modulation) standard for all 700 MHz wideband equipment.

At earlier stages of this proceeding, the FCC correctly decided that public safety users are entitled to some discretion in how they design and operate their systems. We have certain unique operating requirements depending on factors such as whether we are in urban or rural areas, the types of communications we intend to handle, and the frequency with which we need to coordinate with other organizations. The FCC's active role in encouraging interoperability is welcome, particularly for voice communications, where everyone will be using a common language. However, we had planned on, and need the option of, operating radios on the wideband general use channels to meet our specific wideband data applications. Forcing us to have SAM capability in those radios will certainly make that difficult and may make it impossible.

SAM-enabled equipment is not available today and it isn't clear when it will be. That means that all wideband deployment, and even wideband planning, will have to be put on hold for the time being.

The proposed requirement will increase the cost of 700 MHz wideband equipment and it is expected that SAM will require more infrastructure to get the same geographical coverage.

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The proposed SAM standard is almost the same as, if not identical to, the Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) offered by Nextel in the 800 MHz band. It is well known that the interference between Nextel users and public safety users led to re-banding at 800 MHz. We believe that the experience at 800 MHz is indicative of what will happen to public safety services at 700 MHz if this standard is chosen.

If the FCC believes a wideband data "pipe" with interoperability capability is essential, it should look to the recent 4.9 GHz spectrum allocation. Because of the FCC's decisions, this exclusively public safety Wi-Fi-like allocation is being populated by inexpensive wideband devices and enhanced by mesh networking techniques that will support on-scene communications among entities on even an ad hoc basis. Some users may decide they want to have that type of data interoperability at 700 MHz in which case there are channels designated for just that purpose. However, a rule that imposes that obligation on all 700 MHz wideband data users is economically unjustified and operationally unnecessary.

Thank you for considering my comments on this very important matter.

Cordially,

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Stephen R. Ferguson  
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