Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Cellular Telephones and other Wireless Devices Aboard Airborne Aircraft	)	WT Docket No. 04-435

JOINT REPLY COMMENTS OF
MOBILE SATELLITE VENTURES SUBSIDIARY LLC,
GLOBALSTAR LLC, and
IRIDIUM SATELLITE LLC

Mobile Satellite Ventures Subsidiary LLC ("MSV"), Globalstar LLC ("Globalstar"), and Iridium Satellite LLC ("Iridium") hereby file these Joint Reply Comments in the above-captioned proceeding.[1] MSV, Globalstar, and Iridium support the Commission's proposal to allow the use of "pico cells" on board aircraft, and urge the Commission to promote flexible and efficient use of spectrum by (i) facilitating the use of satellites to provide the air-ground link from airborne pico cells and (ii) allowing Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") handsets operating in terrestrial mode to be used on aircraft in conjunction with airborne pico cells.

Background

In the above-captioned proceeding, the Commission is considering ways to facilitate the use of wireless handsets and devices on airborne aircraft. The Commission explains that facilitating such use will benefit consumers and promote homeland security by increasing communications options available for public safety personnel. *NPRM* ¶¶ 2, 10. In response to the *NPRM*, many commenters urged the Commission to allow airborne service using the "pico

[1] *Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Cellular Telephones and other Wireless Devices Aboard Airborne Aircraft, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 04-288, WT Docket No. 04-435 (rel. February 15, 2005) ("*NPRM*").

cell" architecture proposed by the Commission.[2] Other commenters also supported the elimination of the ban on airborne service, subject only to a requirement that any harmful interference caused by such service be mitigated.[3] Several terrestrial wireless service providers and equipment manufacturers expressed concern that pico cell technology may not be adequate to protect terrestrial wireless operations from harmful interference.[4] They thus urged the Commission to proceed with caution and to perform further technical analyses before permitting airborne service using cellular, Personal Communications Services ("PCS"), Specialized Mobile Radio ("SMR"), or other terrestrial wireless frequencies.

In their Comments, MSV, Globalstar, and Iridium supported the use of "pico cell" technologies to facilitate airborne service, urging the Commission to (i) facilitate the use of satellites to provide the air-ground link from an airborne pico cell and (ii) allow MSS handsets operating in terrestrial mode to be used on aircraft in conjunction with airborne pico cells.[5]

Discussion

MSV, Globalstar, and Iridium continue to support the Commission's proposal to enable the use of wireless devices on airborne aircraft through the use of on-board pico cells. Although several terrestrial wireless providers have raised concerns that airborne operations using cellular, PCS, SMR, and other terrestrial wireless frequencies might interfere with terrestrial wireless operations, these concerns would not arise from either the use of satellites to provide the air-

[2] *See, e.g.*, Comments of Telenor Satellite Services, Inc. and ARINC, Inc. (May 26, 2005); Comments of SITA (May 26, 2006); Comments of Rockwell Collins, Inc. (May 26, 2005); Comments of Aircell, Inc. (May 26, 2005).

[3] *See* Comments of Space Data Corporation (May 26, 2005); Comments of Ericsson, Inc. (May 26, 2005).

[4] *See* Comments of CTIA (May 26, 2005); Comments of Sprint Corporation (May 26, 2005); Comments of Qualcomm, Inc. (May 26, 2005); Comments of Motorola, Inc. (May 26, 2005).

[5] *See* Joint Comments of Mobile Satellite Ventures Subsidiary LLC ("MSV") and Globalstar LLC ("Globalstar") (May 26, 2005); Comments of Iridium Satellite LLC (May 26, 2005).

ground link in conjunction with a pico cell or from the use of MSS handsets on airborne aircraft operating with a pico cell. MSS operators have exclusive use of their frequencies throughout their nationwide coverage area and beyond. Thus, the interference concerns which motivated the Commission to ban the use of 800 MHz cellular phones on board aircraft are not applicable to use of satellite frequencies.[6] In fact, the primary risk of interference resulting from the use of MSS handsets on board aircraft operating in terrestrial mode would be to an MSS operator's own satellite service, which MSS operators have a strong incentive to avoid. The terrestrial wireless providers and equipment manufacturers agree that if airborne service could be provided without causing harmful interference, such service would benefit the public interest, convenience, and necessity.[7] Given the significant public interest benefits of airborne service, MSV, Globalstar, and Iridium urge the Commission to act expeditiously to (i) facilitate the use of satellites to provide the air-ground link from an airborne pico cell and (ii) allow MSS handsets operating in terrestrial mode to be used on aircraft in conjunction with airborne pico cells.

[6] In addition, the nationwide licensing of satellite spectrum avoids the issue of what entity is the proper licensee of spectrum used on board an aircraft. *See NPRM* ¶ 18 (noting that geographic-area licensing for cellular and other terrestrial wireless services complicates licensing of airborne operations – "pico cell operations would be airborne and transitory, rather than permanently located in any particular licensee's terrestrial service area, and in principle would access a wide range of cellular frequencies").

[7] *See, e.g.*, Comments of CTIA at 8-9 ("[U]nder the right circumstances, use of pico cells may very well provide a path to allow commercial mobile radio service onboard aircraft."); Comments of Sprint Corporation at 6 ("Sprint agrees with the Commission that a pico cell architecture is 'promising' because it has the potential, at least in theory, to support airborne wireless services without harming terrestrial services and networks.").

Conclusion

MSV, Globalstar, and Iridium request that the Commission act consistently with the views expressed herein.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 11, 2005