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

Re: **NOTICE OF *EX PARTE* MEETINGS**

ET Docket No. 04-186; Unlicensed Operation in the TV Broadcast Bands

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On January 25th, 2006, representatives from the "Grand Ole Opry," the Professional Audio Manufacturers Alliance ("PAMA"), the Sports Video Group ("SVG"), the ad hoc Microphone Interests Coalition ("MIC"), and Shure, Inc. ("Shure"), met with John Branscome, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Copps, to discuss Docket No. 04-186. Attending this meeting on behalf of the "Grand Ole Opry" was Steve Gibson, Music Director/Manager of Creative Services. PAMA and SVG were represented by Paul Gallo, who serves in the same capacity as executive director of both organizations. MIC was represented by Ed Greene, RF & Audio Engineer, Hank Neuberger, President, Springboard Productions, Inc., and Ed Wieczorek, Broadcast and Studio Engineer. Lastly, attending this meeting on behalf of Shure was Jeff Krull, Vice President, and Tom Krajecki, along with Catherine Wang and Timothy Bransford of Bingham McCutchen, outside counsel.

During this meeting we discussed the critical and irreplaceable role that high-performance professional wireless microphones play in live events enjoyed by millions of Americans, such as the countless performances hosted annually by the "Grand Ole Opry," Broadway and touring shows, sporting events including the *Super Bowl Halftime Show*, The Academy Awards Show, The Grammy Awards Show, and the *American Idol* series. In addition, we discussed the great extent to which the broadcasting "white spaces" are already occupied by a wide variety of incumbent applications, and the harmful impact that would result if unlicensed devices were introduced in the "white spaces" without thorough testing and rules that provide full protection from interference for all incumbent services in the band.

A document highlighting discussion points and abbreviated biographies from the attendees representing the "Grand Ole Opry," PAMA/SVG, and MIC were presented to Mr. Branscome, and are attached to this filing.

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If you have any questions regarding these meetings, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Catherine Wang
Timothy L. Bransford

cc (by email): John Branscome, Legal Advisor

Who We Are: This group includes prominent live music producers, wireless microphone manufacturers, sports leagues and broadcasters, and many of the Nation's most well-respected experts in audio production and engineering. Its members are highly acclaimed, having won numerous Emmy awards, Tony awards, and Grammy awards. Together, we offer years of experience and a wealth of practical, real-world knowledge in the professional design, operation and use of wireless microphone systems as a part of high-quality audio systems used in many different sectors of American life.

Our Industry Is Vital: Our industry is vital to production and distribution of news, arts, sports, religious, political, educational and cultural information to the American public. We are responsible for daily productions, such as Broadway shows, as well as the largest and most important events in politics, music, sports and the arts.

The Entire Professional Audio Industry Is Concerned About Interference

- The "white spaces" are not white at all. Wireless microphones and other systems use and rely on this spectrum. It is already difficult to find spectrum.

- Professional audio systems and wireless microphones are integral to the production of "content" that Americans demand from all media and information outlets. We are at the front end of the content chain.

- Professional applications cannot tolerate ANY interference. Events are high-profile and live, and audiences demand high-quality productions. Interference would be crippling.

Wireless Microphones Must Be Fully Protected

- Wireless microphones can be hard to detect. Transmissions are intermittent, not continuous. For frequency efficiencies, power is kept low.

- New portable devices should not be permitted because they present more complex interference problems.

- FCC must thoroughly test whether "spectrum sensing" technology can protect wireless microphones. Promises and vague assurances are not good enough!

- Even if spectrum sensing works, wireless microphones need additional protections, including a beacon system for large events and specially designated spectrum where new unlicensed or licensed devices may not operate. If interference protection techniques cannot be proved effective, the Commission should not allow new devices in the "white spaces."

The Stakes Are High: The American public depends on us for their news, sports, entertainment, religious, and political productions. FCC rules that fail to fully protect wireless microphones would significantly harm the public interest.

THE GRAND OLE OPRY

Steve Gibson, Music Director/Manager of Creative Services (Nashville, TN)
(www.grandoleopry.com)

The "Grand Ole Opry" began broadcasting over commercial radio waves in 1925, just five years after commercial radio was born in the United States. Today, in addition to attending live Opry events at one of its two world class venues, the nation's country fans can experience Opry programming on the radio in over 200 markets, on TV, and via the Internet.

As a studio musician and record producer, Mr. Gibson has been involved in the creation of over 150 gold and platinum records yielding over 200 number one records throughout the careers of artists George Strait, Martina McBride, Patty Loveless, Trisha Yearwood, Alabama, Reba McEntire, Randy Travis, Kenny Chesney, Lee Greenwood, Dolly Parton and scores of others. *Music Row* magazine recognized Mr. Gibson as "Guitarist of the Year" for seven consecutive years for having played on more top ten chart recordings during that period than any other guitarist in Nashville, and he has been the subject of several profiles by *Guitar Player* magazine. A veteran of over 14,000 recording sessions, he has worked all over the world with artists in virtually every field of music and in all types of electronic media, including sound recording, television, motion pictures, radio, and jingles. In his current position as Music Director/Manager of Creative Services for the "Grand Ole Opry," Mr. Gibson oversees music and audio production elements of the Opry's broadcast and live performance programs, including the production of Opry branded recorded audio and DVD projects.

THE PROFESSIONAL AUDIO MANUFACTURERS ALLIANCE ("PAMA")

Paul Gallo, Executive Director (New York, NY)
(www.pamalliance.org)

PAMA is the collective voice and forum for the senior executives of the more than 400 branded manufacturers of professional audio products. PAMA's mission is to promote the growth and profitability of the professional audio manufacturing industry, and to serve as spokesman, advocate, and ombudsman for the industry. PAMA members include:

Audio-Technica USA Inc.
DiGiCo (UK), Ltd
DTS, Inc.
Fairlight Audio
Harman Pro
Neutrik USA Inc
QSC Audio Products
Shure, Inc,
Tascam
TransAmerica Audio Group, Inc.
Califone
Dolby Laboratories, Inc.
ETA Systems
Genelec, OY
Meyer Sound
North American Pro Audio
Sennheiser
Sony Electronics Inc.
Telex Communications

Mr. Gallo has been a major figure in the U.S. music and entertainment technology industry for over 30 years. Mr. Gallo co-founded Pro Sound News in 1978, and later published leading audio/video technology magazines such as Videography, Television Broadcast and EQ. He has also served on the board of directors of several leading professional audio manufacturers. In addition to PAMA, Mr. Gallo serves as an executive director for the Society of Professional Audio Services ("SPARS") and the Sports Video Group ("SVG").

THE SPORTS VIDEO GROUP ("SVG")

Paul Gallo, Executive Director (New York, NY)
(www.sportsvideo.org)

The Sports Video Group ("SVG") was formed to advance the creation, production, and distribution of sports content, and to support the professional community that relies on video, audio, and broadband technologies to produce and distribute sports content. Leagues, owners, teams, players, broadcasters, webcasters, and consumer technology providers have joined the SVG to learn from each other, implement new innovations, and share experiences that will lead to advancements in the sports production/distribution process and the overall consumer sports experience. Current members include, among others, the **NFL, MLB, the NHL, NASCAR, the PGA, the USTA, ABC, NBC, CBS, Turner Sports, and ESPN.**

SHURE, INC.

Jeff Krull, Vice President (Niles, Illinois)
(www.shure.com)

For nearly eighty years, Shure, Inc. has been a respected U.S. manufacturer of high quality, innovative audio products. Today, Shure is a global leader in audio electronics, including professional wireless audio products that amplify, process, and mix sound. Shure's equipment is an integral part of virtually all professional audio systems at major U.S. events -- including the 2006 national political conventions, the SuperBowl, live music concerts, Broadway productions, and many more venues.

Mr. Krull is Shure's Vice President, Engineering. In this capacity, Mr. Krull oversees all engineering activities including new product development, advanced research, and navigates the complex arena of worldwide product regulatory compliance. The products developed during Mr. Krull's tenure include headsets which received "Innovation Award" honors from the Consumer Electronics Association ("CEA") and Industrial Designers Society of America ("IDSA") at the 2005 and 2006 Consumer Electronics Shows ("CES"), a coveted mark of distinction in the consumer electronics industry.

MICROPHONE INTERESTS COALITION ("MIC")

PRG Audio - Bob Rendon, Vice President (New York, NY)
(www.prg.com)

PRG Audio provides professional integrated audio solutions in North America, Asia, and Europe for venues ranging in size from giant outdoor stadiums to intimate cabarets. Recent clients include NBC, ABC, the NBA, the NHL, Radio City Music Hall, the Democratic National Convention, *Survivor*, *The Producers* and *The Super Bowl*, as well as, recording artists such as Aerosmith, Nickelback, Roberto Cavalli, and Art Garfunkel.

In addition to literally thousands of corporate and special events, some of Mr. Rendon's recent major projects have included the production of the popular television show *Who Wants to be A Millionaire?*, the annual *Tony Awards*, the annual lighting of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, and *Broadway Under the Stars*.

Springboard Productions, Inc. - Hank Neuberger, President (Evanston, IL)
(www.springboardproductions.net)

Springboard Productions provides cutting-edge media and audio production solutions for a wide variety of clients. Springboard's latest round of innovative projects include producing the first downloadable video available at iTunes, co-producing a high-definition performance of the Dave Matthews Band for PBS, and producing The John Mayer Trio in high-definition for Sony Music. Additional projects in 2006 involved Van Morrison, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Willie Nelson, Beck, Elvis Costello, Robert Plant, Styx, Barenaked Ladies, Michael McDonald, and Bonnie Raitt.

Mr. Neuberger is a Grammy-winning producer, the former chairman of the board of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (a/k/a "The Recording Academy"), and the executive vice president of two world-class recording studio complexes, Glenwood Place Studios and the Chicago Recording Company.

Masque Sound - Geoff Shearing, Vice President (New York, NY)
(www.masquesound.com)

Founded in 1936 by three Broadway stagehands, Masque Sound today is a premier leading edge provider of sound equipment for Broadway shows, and a provider of complete sound reinforcement solutions for television productions, sporting events, live concerts and conventions. Recent productions include *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, *Tommy*, *Rent*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *The Lion King*.

Masque Sound is guided by Geoff and Jim Shearing, grandsons of one of the original founders.

Sound Associates, Inc. - T. Richard Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer (New York, NY)
(www.soundassociates.com)

For 60 years Sound Associates, Inc. has been a premier supplier of professional audio and video systems. Sound Associates has become synonymous with high end installations that run the gamut from Broadway theaters and concert halls to corporate boardrooms and houses of worship. Sound Associates has also pioneered innovative assistive technologies that bring the magic of live theatre to the deaf and blind, and has received numerous awards for its work in this field, including the Secretary's Highest Recognition Award by the Department of Health and Human Services. Recent projects include *Sister Act*, *The Wiz*, and *Mary Poppins*.

Mr. Fitzgerald is the recipient of a Tony Award for his innovative design work that introduced groundbreaking infrared listening systems to Broadway theatres to aid deaf patrons. Mr. Fitzgerald is also the designer of the *ShowTrans* automated multi-language commentary system, the *I-Caption* individual closed captioning system, and the *D-Scriptive* descriptive commentary system.

Ed Greene, Distinguished RF & Audio Engineer (Los Angeles, CA)

Mr. Greene is a preeminent and widely acclaimed RF and audio engineer specializing in the production of musical and live television events. During his lengthy career, Mr. Greene has been the recipient of 19 Emmy Awards, and has been nominated over 40 times. Mr. Greene's recent projects include production work on the *Superbowl Halftime Show*, the *American Idol* series, the 2007 Oscar Awards, and the 2007 Tony Awards.

Ed Wieczorek, Senior RF & Broadcast Engineer (New York, NY)

Mr. Wieczorek has nearly three decades of experience coordinating and managing RF transmissions and equipment. During his 20 plus years at NBC, he designed and installed the wireless systems used on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Late Show with Conan O'Brien*, *The Today Show*, and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. In addition, Mr. Wieczorek has served as the wireless frequency coordinator for all NBC events and programming in and around NBC's Rockefeller Center facilities, and has twice served as the transmission engineer for NBC's broadcast facilities at the Olympics.