

47 CFR Part 15

[ET Docket No. 10-26; FCC 11-133]

Definition of Part 15 Auditory Assistance Device

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

Comments made by: Joseph Rhody, owner, Infinity Translation Services Inc, a provider of simultaneous interpretation and auditory assistance devices.

I am writing to express my support for the proposal to amend the part 15 definition of "auditory assistance device" to permit these devices to be used by anyone at any location for simultaneous language interpretation in the 72 – 76MHz band.

Section 10:

1. I agree with the Commission's assessment that its proposed rule change would not impose additional costs. In fact, it would likely reduce the costs. By opening this type of equipment to a broader range of uses the effect will be that a broader range of businesses will be willing sell and/or rent out this type of equipment, thereby increasing competition in the market and reducing prices according to normal market operations. So the effect would likely be to increase the availability of the devices and to lower the cost of them.
2. We also agree that the proposed action would serve the public interest by aiding the comprehension of individuals who require language interpretation. It would do this by making interpretation equipment available and affordable to a larger number of businesses and consumers. Under the current rules the types of transmission that are allowed to be used for interpretation are either too limited to be useful or are so expensive that they are out of reach for most entities that need them. These two types of transmission are the 216MHz band and the infrared band. The 216MHz band is limited by the fact that it can only support 3 concurrent channels within the allowed frequency range. Many events requiring simultaneous interpretation require more than 3 languages and we need one channel for each language. So, in this situation our only option is to use equipment that operates in the infrared band. This equipment is currently so expensive (usually 3 to 5 times the cost of equipment in the 72MHz or 216MHz band) that it is completely out of reach for all but the very few, very large players in the market. This significantly limits the competition in the market thus supporting very high retail and rental prices. Moreover, the infrared band is limited in its range of transmission making it difficult or impossible to get a clear signal in very large venues.

Section 13

Will increased usage of the 72 -76 MHz band cause interference to licensed users in, and adjacent to, the band?

As stated in this section, under the current rules for auditory assistance devices they have not been found to cause interference to other authorized services in these bands or adjacent bands. The FCC already limits the power and range of these devices. Most of that would be used for language interpretation have a range limited to 150 feet without obstructions. The most powerful ones have a range of 1000 feet without obstructions. However, they are almost always used within a building and the building structure serves to further limit the range of these devices. In my experience as a provider of auditory assistance devices and

interpretation devices we find that the signal is significantly reduced by the walls of the room in which we are transmitting and almost never audible outside of the building. Thus we feel that the current FCC limits on the range of this equipment have already been shown to sufficiently prevent any harmful interference with other authorized services using the same frequency band.

#### Section 14

Would the proposed expanded use of auditory assistance devices lead to harmful interference to authorized services in adjacent bands?

As stated above, the current range limits on auditory assistance devices already significantly limit the distance that their signals can travel and have not been shown to cause interference with other, in band services. Thus the likelihood that they would cause harmful interference in adjacent bands is even less. Moreover if the 72 – 76MHz band were opened up for use in language interpretation, the expanded use would mostly occur in hotels and convention centers where multilingual meetings normally occur, and which are generally not located in residential areas where televisions receiving VHF channels would most likely be located. In hotels the televisions almost always have cable TV, thus negating the possibility of interference there.

#### Section 15

As we have stated above, out of band are unlikely to cause a problems with VHF television transmissions, however, if the commission to the out of band emission limits we feel that existing auditory assistance equipment should be grandfathered in for the life of the equipment. If this were not done the change in limits would force a great number of houses of worship, non-profit community organizations, museums, theaters and other such organizations to spend a great deal of money replace and upgrading their current equipment. If they could not afford to make these changes they would be forced to stop providing auditory assistance.

#### Section 16

Would the advantages of improving the reception of VHF TV channels 4 and 5 outweigh the disadvantages associated with further restricting part 15 auditory assistance device emissions to both manufacturers and users of these devices?

As stated above, since the current limits on the range of auditory assistance devices already makes it unlikely for the signal to reach beyond the walls of a building, and the expanded usage would most likely occur in locations where VHF TV channels would be not viewed, the advantages of further limiting the emissions would be unlikely to improve the reception of VHF TV channels. On the other hand the disadvantages that would be placed upon the manufacturers and users of these devices would be significant.

#### Section 23

We would estimate that the majority of organizations that purchase, rent and use simultaneous interpretation equipment qualify as “small entities”, including our own organization. Within our own rental and sales transactions (as providers of interpretation equipment) we estimate that number to comprise roughly 90% of our customers. Under the current rules the equipment that is available for use in language interpretation (216MHz and infrared) is prohibitively expensive and has significant limits in its usefulness. Auditory assistance equipment in the 72 to 76MHz band is significantly less expensive and more useful than the equipment currently available for language interpretation because it can accommodate more concurrent channels than the 216MHz equipment and transmit over a longer range than the infrared equipment, enabling it to be use for more than 3 languages and transmit a clear signal in a very large meeting hall. Thus altering the rules as proposed to allow the 72 – 76MHz band to be used for simultaneous interpretation will benefit a great number of small entities by making assistive listening devices

and interpretation equipment more easily attainable by lowering the price and making them more widely available as explained in our response to section 10 above.

In conclusion, we support the propose change to allow the 72MHz -76MHz frequency range to be used for simultaneous interpretation services. This change will benefit both those needing auditory assistance and those needing simultaneous interpretation by making the equipment for both of those services less expensive and more abundant in the market.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our comments.

Joseph Rhody  
Infinity Translation Services Inc.