

FCC GRANTS LICENSES FOR TWO "BIG LEO" SATELLITE SYSTEMS

Today the FCC's International Bureau issued licenses to Constellation Communic Inc. (Constellation) and Mobile Communications Holdings, Inc. (MCHI) to construct a two satellite systems. The systems will operate according to the rules governing the GHz Mobile Satellite Service, more commonly known as the "Big LEO" service. Granting these licenses enhances the prospects for competition and consumer choice among off global voice-and-data communications via handheld telephones.

Big LEO satellite systems have the ability to provide both voice and data mobile services, via hand-held telephones, all over the world. The systems also can offer services such as search and rescue communications, disaster management communications, industrial and environmental monitoring, and paging services.

In 1994, the Commission issued a Report and Order that established the technical licensing and operating rules for Big LEO services. It adopted strict financial qualification standards in that Order because of the limited amount of spectrum available at the January 1995, when the International Bureau granted licenses for three Big LEO satellite systems, MCHI and Constellation had not yet established that they were financially qualified. The Bureau allowed the two applicants until September 1996 to establish their qualifications. The orders issued today, the International Bureau finds that the financial showing is still insufficient. However, for the reasons stated in the Order and Authorizations, the International Bureau granted Constellation's and MCHI's requests for waivers of the qualification requirement and grant both applications.

Constellation proposes to construct a 46-satellite system called "ARIES," while proposed a sixteen satellite system called "ELLIPSO." The systems will be used to provide services such as two-way voice and value-added data services, including geolocation, paging/and remote monitoring. The license terms for both systems is 10 years.

Action by the Chief, International Bureau and Chief, Office of Engineering and Technology, adopted by two Order and Authorizations (DA 97- 1366 and DA 97-1367), adopted June 30, 1997

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