

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF SPECIAL TEMPORARY AUTHORITY

The Commission has granted Space Exploration Holdings, LLC (“SpaceX”) Special Temporary Authority (“STA”) to operate very-high frequency (“VHF”) beacons on SpaceX’s recently licensed second generation (“Gen2”) satellites during launch and early operations, orbit raising, and for emergency backup telemetry, tracking and command.¹ That STA has been sufficient to cover SpaceX’s initial Gen2 launches, but will expire on April 21, 2023. SpaceX anticipates a regular cadence of further launches throughout 2023, which will require additional authorization for communications with these beacons. Accordingly, SpaceX respectfully requests that the Commission extend this STA for an additional 60 days for the reasons discussed below.

SpaceX currently has an application pending for full-time authority to operate the VHF beacons on Gen2 satellites.² While that application is being processed, SpaceX has operated beacons pursuant to STA and has received no complaints from any authorized spectrum user. The operation of these beacons has enabled SpaceX to enhance space sustainability by providing redundant capabilities for the TT&C functions that are essential to tracking and locating the spacecraft and ensuring the health and safety of SpaceX’s Gen2 constellation. Extending the STA would allow SpaceX to continue to support better tracking of all SpaceX satellites from insertion through orbit raising and in any emergency situation. These details will benefit all operators in the instance of a conjunction or an anomaly. Accordingly, extension of the STA will continue to serve the public interest by enhancing space safety and promoting the health and safety of SpaceX’s Gen2 constellation.

SpaceX will operate the tracking beacons with the technical parameters provided in the application and the conditions in the current STA. SpaceX will continue to operate these beacons under the STA on a non-interference basis. In the extremely unlikely event that harmful interference should occur due to transmissions to or from its spacecraft, SpaceX will take all reasonable steps to eliminate the interference. Should an issue arise, SpaceX can be reached at satellite-operators-pager@spacex.com, which links to the pagers of appropriate technical personnel 24/7/365.

Accordingly, SpaceX requests that the Commission extend the STA for the VHF beacons for an additional 60 days.

¹ See Stamp Grant, IBFS File No. SAT-STA-20230202-00020 (IB, Feb. 17, 2023). The grant was made effective as of February 20, 2023.

² See IBFS File No. SAT-AMD-20221216-00175, Callsign: S3069.