

May 24, 2006

Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Obstacles to Delivery of Next-Generation Satellite Communications Services

(File Nos. SES-LFS-20050826-01175; SES-MFS-20051122-01614; SES-STA-20060307-00374; SES-STA-20060310-00419; SES-LFS-20050930-01352; SES-MFS-20060118-00050; SES-STA-20060308-00388; SES-STA-20060313-00430; SES-LFS-20051011-01396; SES-STA-20060314-00438; SES-MFS-20051207-01709; SES-STA-20060307-00372; SES-LFS-20051123-01634; SES-STA-20060316-00454; SES-MFS-20051202-01665; SES-STA-20060307-00373; SES-LFS-20060303-00343; SES-STA-20060315-00445)

Dear Commissioner Tate:

We are writing to remind you that so many public safety organizations and branches of government within Florida rely on voice and data services provided by Mobile Satellite Ventures, L.P. ("MSV"). Florida heavily values satellite communications, and we equally value our communications during disasters, such as the hurricanes that are seasonal here in Florida. During natural disasters, MSV provides reliable, critical communications to key state agencies when other communications networks and infrastructure—such as telephone and cellular service—were destroyed by the hurricane or other disaster. MSV's mobile satellite services helped us save lives and bring relief to tens of thousands of people. Their two-way satellite communications made the difference in our ability to assess, respond to and recover from the devastating effects of natural disasters.

Our department is here to serve all of Orange County, Florida, tourist destination of the world, and prides itself on our ability to respond quickly in emergency situations. Obviously a large part of our emergency response is our ability to communicate during emergency situations.

We have recently learned about MSV's next-generation hybrid system, which could begin operation as early as 2009. This new terrestrial-satellite system will allow our first responders to easily shift to satellite service whenever local land facilities are overloaded or destroyed, as well as receive broadband access over the same handheld device. It will also provide the only mobile broadband service available to many rural and remote areas. Delivery of this next-generation satellite system, however, may be hampered by two obstacles: return of some L band spectrum it loaned to Inmarsat; and the existing, inefficient distribution of the L band spectrum among the five parties that currently control the L band spectrum in North America.

As another hurricane season approaches, we all continue to assess how we respond to natural disasters and other homeland security situations. We should continue to foster and support new developments in satellite communications and ensure that this vital tool is available to first responders and other emergency personnel.

We believe that the Commission can play an important role in making this possible by: redistributing the L band spectrum among the parties so that their shares are contiguous and, therefore, capable of delivering broadband service via satellite; and requiring the return of loaned spectrum to MSV. We respectfully request that the Commission take steps to alleviate these obstacles so that MSV and others can make their next-generation satellite services available to us in a timely, efficient manner.

Very truly yours,

Greg Ek-
Collins

Communications and Warning Coordinator
Orange County Emergency Management
PO Box 5879
Winter Park, FL 32793
407-836-9805

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