

REQUEST FOR WAIVER

By this application (the “Application”), GCI Communication Corp. (“GCI”) hereby petitions the International Bureau (the “Bureau”) to waive the temporary freeze regarding fixed-satellite service (“FSS”) earth station licenses in the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band (the “Filing Freeze”).¹ A waiver in this instance is appropriate as it will “serve the public interest and not undermine the objectives of the freeze.”² GCI is further seeking a waiver of the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission”) license renewal deadline set forth in 47 C.F.R. 25.121(e) for the spectrum license identified by call sign E020283 (referred to herein as the “License”), covering locations in the extremely rural geographic areas of Chalkyitsik (the “Market”). By this filing, pursuant to 47 C.F.R. 1.925, and for good cause shown, GCI seeks a waiver of the January 2018 renewal application filing deadline due to an internal administrative error that resulted in GCI not timely filing the renewal application, and ultimately, reinstatement of the License through this license application.

The GCI employee responsible for making the filing inadvertently missed the filing date. Once this was known, the employee took immediate steps to initiate a reinstatement of the License, this waiver, and an STA request. GCI is currently adopting additional procedures to help avoid such administrative errors in the future.

Section 1.925 of the FCC rules empowers the Commission to waive specific requirements of the rules upon request if (a) the underlying purpose of the rule would not be

¹ See *Temporary Freeze on Applications for New or Modified Fixed Satellite Service Earth Stations and Fixed Microwave Stations in the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band, 90 Day Window to File Applications for Earth Stations Currently Operating in 3.7-4.2 GHz Band*, Public Notice, DA 18-398 (rel. Apr. 19, 2018) (“Filing Freeze PN”).

² *Id.* at 3.

served or would be frustrated by the application of the rule, and a waiver would serve the public interest; or (b) unique or unusual circumstances are presented such that it would be inequitable, unduly burdensome or contrary to the public interest to enforce the rule, and the applicant has no reasonable alternative.³

In this instance, grant of the requested waiver is necessary for GCI to provide necessary, reliable communications services to GCI's customers, and would serve the public interest.

Failing to grant a waiver of the renewal deadline would actually undermine the purposes of the Commission's renewal rules. In this instance, GCI provides service to the Yukon Flats School District and rural Internet to the local population, which is in an extremely rural area in Alaska. A waiver of the renewal application deadline will permit GCI to offer these important services to the public over the License. Accordingly the purpose of the Commission's renewal is not undermined, but in fact promoted.

Moreover, the purpose of the Commission's renewal rules is to encourage the provision of service to customers and to prevent carriers from warehousing unused spectrum resources. The substantial public service record of GCI indicates that the company is committed to providing service to consumers in Alaska.

Providing mobile service to Alaska is particularly challenging. Such challenges include "its remoteness, lack of roads, challenges and costs associated with transporting fuel, lack of scalability per community, satellite and backhaul availability, extreme weather conditions,

³ 47 C.F.R. §1.925(b)(3).

challenging topography, and short construction season.”⁴ Therefore, GCI must utilize a variety of technologies in order to provide dependable services, and often must do so in innovative ways. This includes using FSS in conjunction with its terrestrial mobile and fixed wireless networks. GCI relies on the 3.7 GHz band in order to provide its FSS operations, and has a very long history of providing C-band satellite communications solutions in Alaska in ways that advance the satellite technology space in an effort to provide communications services in rural Alaska.

In addition, such a grant will not undermine the objective of the Filing Freeze. The International, Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Wireless Telecommunications Bureaus state that this objective is to limit “the potential for speculative applications that might be filed in anticipation of potential future actions by the Commission.”⁵ That is certainly not the case here. GCI has no reasonable alternative, as the License presents the only current viable option for providing such communications services to these areas on a going-forward basis. Fiber is also not a viable alternative as this region experiences permafrost, which causes uneven freezing and thawing at or near the ground surface that can damage buried fiber optic cable. GCI has a demonstrated need for this authorization to provide necessary services now and in the future.⁶

⁴ *Connect America Fund; Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund; Connect America Fund - Alaska Plan*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 10139, 10162, ¶ 72 (2016) (“*Alaska Plan R&O*”) (citing *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 17663, 17829, ¶ 507 (2011) (“*USF/ICC Transformation Order*”), *aff’d sub nom. FCC 11-161*, 753 F.3d 1015 (10th Cir. 2014)).

⁵ Filing Freeze PN at 3.

⁶ *See, e.g.*, Reply Comments of General Communication, Inc., GN Docket 17-183 (filed Nov. 15, 2017); Comments of General Communication, Inc., GN Docket No. 17-183 (filed Oct. 2, 2017).

GCI also has no reasonable alternative to seeking this waiver, as the January 2018 renewal deadline for the license has already passed, and the License has been terminated. GCI wishes to reinstate this License through the requested waiver. This Application demonstrates that the public interest would be served by a grant of the requested waiver. Accordingly, for good cause shown, GCI requests a waiver of the Filing Freeze, a waiver of the renewal application deadline, consistent with the request for relief set forth herein, a reinstatement of the License, and any other such relief as the Commission may deem proper.