

May 26, 2006

Chairman Kevin J. Martin  
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 Chairman Martin:

As a Supervisor in Hinds County, Mississippi, I have seen first hand the importance of reliable communications capabilities during emergency situations. Many first responders' ability to communicate with other rescue personnel and with state officials during and following the most catastrophic storm in our state's history was made possible by the mobile satellite services provided by Mobile Satellite Ventures. Many usual means of communicating were interrupted or completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. I am certain that without those services, some emergency response teams would not have had the success in recovery efforts following the storm. As the world watched, the Gulf Coast of Mississippi was battered by winds and water for several hours. It was obvious to us all that communications was, by far, the most important aspect of recovery operations.

Now, as our state continues its recovery and begins to rebuild, our first responders have a particular interest in a new system provided by MSV. This system, had it been available during this catastrophe, could have made the first responders' communications even more reliable and efficient. As I understand it, this system, considered to be next-generation technology, will allow first responders to easily switch to satellite service when other facilities are not available and will also provide broadband access using the same handheld device. In addition, this technology will be able to provide mobile broadband to the outlying areas, many of which suffered great loss, as well. However, stumbling blocks to making this service available and could possibly delay the delivery of this next-generation satellite system is MSV's loaned L band spectrum. This loaned L band spectrum needs to be returned to Mobile Satellite Ventures from Inmarsat, and the L band spectrum used currently by five parties needs to be redistributed so that all parties' shares are contiguous.

As we continue to assess ways to better respond to emergencies, I would respectfully ask that the Commission take an active role in paving the way to improved communications during catastrophes. In doing so, not only would this action benefit our state's future needs, but the needs of other states, as well.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Yours very truly,

Charles A. Barbour  
Hinds County Supervisor  
District 1

Cc: The Honorable Trent Lott  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Haley Barbour