

May 24, 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:

The Great State of Mississippi suffered widespread destruction from Hurricane Katrina this past August. This unprecedented storm proved to all Mississippians and to the world just how crucial a role reliable communications play in recovering from such devastation. Public safety organizations within our state rely on the services of Mobile Satellite Ventures, L.P. ("MSV"). We expect reliable communications services from MSV and have not been disappointed. No one knows better than us just how important communications services are.

Following Hurricane Katrina, MSV provided the critical communications to key state agencies when other means of network's infrastructures were destroyed. We were able to save lives and provide relief to thousands with the help of MSV's mobile satellite services.

As a State Senator, I am particularly interested in any technology that will enable our first responders to be able to quickly assess and begin operations during any emergency. I was recently informed of a new system provided by MSV and is considered next-generation technology. I understand that it could be available as soon as 2009. This new terrestrial-satellite system allows first responders to shift to satellite service easily when land facilities are otherwise unavailable. It will also be capable of providing broadband access over the same handheld device. The most important aspect of this service is that it will provide the only mobile broadband service to many rural and remote areas of Mississippi. There seems to be a possible roadblock to MSV's capability to deliver this next-generation satellite system – MSV needs L band spectrum it loaned to Inmarsat to be returned and the existing distribution of the L band spectrum among the five parties that currently control the L band spectrum in North America needs to be redistributed so that their shares are contiguous.

Hurricane season is once again upon us. Mississippi is continuously looking at how we can better respond in emergency situations. It is my hope that Mississippians never again suffer the desolation and despair that was felt after Hurricane Katrina. As the 2006 hurricane season fast approaches, we are continuing to assess how we respond to these natural disasters, as well as other homeland security situations. I believe that the Commission can play an important role in making this possible. I would, therefore, respectfully request that the Commission take the necessary steps in removing any obstacles to the delivery of broadband service via satellite and by requiring the return of loaned L band spectrum to MSV.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Senator Merle Flowers
P.O. Box 750
Southaven, Mississippi 38671
Phone: (662) 349-3983
Fax: (662) 349-3985
www.merleflowers.com

Cc: Senator Trent Lott
Senator Thad Cochran
Governor Haley Barbour