

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL TEMPORARY AUTHORITY

AC BidCo LLC (“AC BidCo”), which holds a license to operate an earth station aboard aircraft (“ESAA”) network,¹ hereby requests special temporary authority (“STA”) for a period of 60 days commencing as soon as possible but no later than May 15, 2020, to permit up to 100 AeroSat model HR6400 ESAA terminals and up to 100 ThinKom model 2Ku terminals to communicate with the U.S.-licensed Intelsat 901 satellite and Intelsat 32e payload in conventional and extended Ku-band frequencies. AC BidCo has applied to modify its ESAA license to add these satellites as authorized points of communication² and seeks STA pending action on the Modification. Grant of the requested STA will serve the public interest by allowing AC BidCo to respond to urgent customer demand for capacity on U.S. international flights.

Background

AC BidCo is currently authorized to operate two types of Ku-band terminals, AeroSat model HR6400 antennas designated as AES1 on the AC BidCo License and ThinKom model 2Ku antennas designated as AES2 on the license, with specified satellites for ESAA service in U.S. airspace, foreign airspace, and the airspace over international waters. AC BidCo’s license was issued based on demonstration that the proposed network would enhance competition in the provision of in-flight broadband service to air travelers and airline crew members and that the planned operations were fully consistent with technical standards designed to ensure protection of other authorized communications networks. In order to enhance and expand its ESAA operations, AC BidCo filed the Modification to update the satellites authorized as points of communication for the AC BidCo network.

STA Request

AC BidCo requests STA to commence communications with Intelsat 901 and Intelsat 32e in the near term to respond to pressing customer demand. As described in the Modification, AC BidCo seeks authority to use Intelsat 901 at 27.5° W.L. to replace capacity previously provided at that location by Intelsat 907 in the 14-14.5 GHz uplink spectrum and the 10.95-11.2 GHz and 11.45-11.7 GHz downlink spectrum. AC BidCo seeks to use the Intelsat 32e payload on the SKY-B1 satellite in the 14-14.5 GHz uplink spectrum and the 11.7-12.2 GHz downlink spectrum. Communications with these satellites will comply with applicable coordination agreements with adjacent satellites, as demonstrated by the supporting letters provided with the Modification.

¹ Call Sign E120106, File No. SES-MFS-20191112-01456, granted Apr. 13, 2020 (the “AC BidCo License”).

² See Call Sign E120106, File No. SES-MFS-20200501-00470 (the “Modification”).

Intelsat 901 will provide coverage of the East Pacific region and South America and is needed to ensure capacity on a new flight route between the United States and Argentina. The Intelsat 32e payload will provide coverage of the Eastern United States and the Atlantic Ocean Region and is needed to meet demand for capacity on heavily traveled routes between the United States and Europe.

AC BidCo emphasizes that the scope of this STA request is limited. AC BidCo is only seeking authority to add Intelsat 901 and Intelsat 32e as authorized points of communication for a limited number of ESAA terminals on an unprotected, non-harmful interference basis. AC BidCo will otherwise operate consistently with the terms and conditions set forth in the existing AC BidCo License.

Public Interest Showing

Grant of the requested STA is consistent with Commission policy and will serve the public interest by allowing AC BidCo to respond to customer requirements, promoting competition in the provision of aeronautical services and expanding the availability of in-flight broadband to air travelers and crew members. No authorized users of the spectrum will be adversely affected by these operations.

AC BidCo understands that any Commission grant of this STA will be without prejudice to the ultimate determination the Commission will make regarding the Modification. In addition, AC BidCo acknowledges that any action taken pursuant to a grant of the requested STA will be at AC BidCo's own risk.