

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of )
Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band ) GN Docket No. 18-122; GN Docket No. 21-320
Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation of )
Intelsat License LLC, debtor in possession, as )
amended )

ORDER

Adopted: November 12, 2021

Released: November 12, 2021

By the Acting Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau:

1. With this Order, and subject to the conditions described below, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB or Bureau) validates the Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation (Certification), as amended, filed by Intelsat License LLC, debtor in possession<sup>1</sup> (together with any successor in interest,<sup>2</sup> Intelsat) relating to the ongoing transition of the 3.7 GHz band.<sup>3</sup>

2. In the 3.7 GHz Report and Order, the Commission adopted rules to make 280 megahertz of mid-band spectrum available for flexible use (plus a 20 megahertz guard band) throughout the contiguous United States by transitioning existing services out of the lower portion of the 3.7-4.2 GHz band (C-band) and into the upper 200 megahertz of the band (i.e., 4.0-4.2 GHz).<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the 3.7 GHz Report and Order established a deadline of December 5, 2025, by which incumbent space station operators were to complete the transition of their operations to the upper 200 megahertz of the band, but it also provided an opportunity for accelerated clearing of the band by allowing eligible space station operators to voluntarily commit to relocate on a two-phased accelerated schedule, with a Phase I deadline

1 Intelsat License LLC, debtor in possession, Phase I Certificate of Accelerated Relocation, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 21-320 (filed Oct. 4, 2021) (Intelsat Certification); Intelsat License LLC, debtor in possession, Amendment, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 21-320 (filed Oct. 15, 2021) (Intelsat Amendment). In the instant Order, the Bureau is only considering the showing made in, and validating, the Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation filed by Intelsat, as amended. This is without prejudice to any procedures and processes the Bureau may adopt for Phase II Certifications, or any future showing made by Intelsat in conjunction with Phase II of the ongoing transition of the 3.7 GHz band. Furthermore, this Order is without prejudice to other issues that are or may come before the Commission or that the Commission considers properly before other fora.

2 There is currently pending before the Commission an application for assignment and/or transfer of control of licenses pursuant to Section 310(d) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. § 310(d). See Application for Assignment of Authorizations held by Intelsat License, as debtor-in-possession, Narrative, IBFS File No. SAT-ASG-20210826-00117 (filed Aug. 26, 2021) (Application). This Order shall be binding on and/or inure to the benefit of any successor in interest if and to the extent the Application is granted.

3 See Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band, GN Docket No. 18-122, Report and Order and Order of Proposed Modification, 35 FCC Rcd 2343, 2456-57, at paras. 297-300 (2020) (3.7 GHz Report and Order).

4 3.7 GHz Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd at 2345, para. 4.

of December 5, 2021, and a Phase II deadline of December 5, 2023.<sup>5</sup> All five eligible space station operators elected accelerated relocation.<sup>6</sup>

3. By electing accelerated relocation, the eligible space station operators, among other things, voluntarily committed to perform all the tasks necessary to enable any incumbent earth station<sup>7</sup> that receives or sends C-band signals from or to a space station owned by that operator to maintain that functionality in the upper 200 megahertz of the band.<sup>8</sup> The *3.7 GHz Report and Order* stated that “[t]o the extent eligible space station operators can meet the Phase I and Phase II Accelerated Relocation Deadlines, they will be eligible to receive the accelerated relocation payments associated with those deadlines.”<sup>9</sup> Once the Bureau validates an eligible space station operator’s Certification, the relevant Accelerated Relocation Payment (ARP) is to be disbursed by the Relocation Payment Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse).<sup>10</sup>

4. The *3.7 GHz Report and Order* specified that an “eligible space station operator’s satisfaction of the Accelerated Relocation Deadlines will be determined by the timely filing of a Certification of Accelerated Relocation demonstrating, in good faith, that it has completed the necessary clearing actions to satisfy each deadline” and directed WTB to prescribe the form of such Certifications and any challenges by relevant stakeholders.<sup>11</sup> WTB was also directed to establish the process for how any challenges may impact incremental decreases in the ARP.<sup>12</sup> Further, “the Bureau, Clearinghouse, and relevant stakeholders will have the opportunity to review the Certification of Accelerated Relocation and identify potential deficiencies,” and if “credible challenges as to the space station operator’s satisfaction

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<sup>5</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2408, para. 155; 47 CFR § 27.1412(b)(1)-(2). By the Phase I deadline of December 5, 2021, eligible space station operators must repack any existing services and relocate associated incumbent earth stations throughout the contiguous United States into the upper 380 megahertz of the C-band (3820-4200 MHz), and the operators must provide passband filters to block signals from the 3700-3820 MHz band to associated incumbent earth stations in 46 of the top 50 PEAs. *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2414, para. 171; 47 CFR § 27.1412(b)(1)-(2). By the Phase II deadline of December 5, 2023, eligible space station operators must repack any existing service and relocate associated incumbent earth stations throughout the contiguous United States into the upper 200 megahertz of the C-band (4.0-4.2 GHz), and the operators must provide passband filters to block signals from the 3700-4000 MHz band to all associated incumbent earth stations in the contiguous United States. *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces Accelerated Clearing in the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band*, GN Docket No. 18-122, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 5517 (WTB 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Incumbent earth stations are defined as those Fixed Satellite Service earth stations that “(1) were operational as of April 19, 2018; (2) are licensed or registered (or had a pending application for license or registration) in the IBFS database as of November 7, 2018; and (3) have timely certified, to the extent required by the *Order* adopted in FCC 18-91 (as we clarify . . . to include certain renewal applications and license and registration applications filed through November 7, 2018), the accuracy of information on file with the Commission.” *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2392, para. 116; 47 CFR §§ 25.138(c), 27.1411(b)(3).

<sup>8</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2455, para. 292.

<sup>9</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2456, paras. 232, 297; 47 CFR § 27.1412(b).

<sup>10</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 300. Following validation, the Clearinghouse shall promptly notify the 3.7 GHz Service Licensees, who must pay the ARP to the Clearinghouse within 60 days of the notice. *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 300; 47 CFR § 27.1422(c). The Clearinghouse must disburse the ARP to the eligible space station operator within seven (7) days of receipt. *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 298; 47 CFR § 27.1412(g).

<sup>12</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, paras. 298-99. Should an eligible space station operator miss the Phase I or Phase II deadline, it may still receive a reduced, but non-zero, ARP if it otherwise meets the Certification requirements within six months after the relevant Accelerated Relocation Deadline. *Id.* at 2456, para. 297; 47 CFR § 27.1422(d).

of the relevant deadline are made, the Bureau will issue a public notice identifying such challenges.<sup>13</sup> Absent notice from WTB of deficiencies in the Certification within 30 days of its filing, the Certification will be deemed validated.<sup>14</sup> Where challenges or deficiencies are found, the Bureau will render a final decision as to the validity of the Certification no later than 60 days from its filing.<sup>15</sup>

5. As directed, on August 4, 2021, the Bureau issued a Public Notice implementing filing procedures for Phase I Certifications and related challenges.<sup>16</sup> The *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* stated that to satisfy the Phase I deadline, the Certification must describe in detail each action that was taken by the eligible space station operator, including the date of completion, in a similar format and content to that operator's Transition Plan.<sup>17</sup> This description should include (but is not limited to):

- The operations that were repacked to satisfy the Phase I deadline;
- The number of new satellites, if any, that the eligible space station operator launched, including the dates of launch, reaching final orbit, and start of operations;
- A description of how services were migrated to the upper portion of the band, including the pre- and post-transition frequencies that each customer occupied and now occupies;
- Any necessary technology upgrades or other solutions, such as video compression or modulation, that the eligible space station operator implemented, described on a per antenna and/or feed basis, as appropriate;
- The number and location of antennas and feeds that were transitioned to satisfy the Phase I deadline, including the actions taken (e.g., retuning and repointing) for each;
- The date of completion of the above items;
- A description of the steps that the eligible space station operator has taken to identify all associated earth stations, antennas, and feeds, and to ensure that they are all transitioned as of the date of Certification;
- Details relating to any variances from the eligible space station operator's Transition Plan, such as antennas and feeds involving circumstances beyond the control of the eligible space station operator and therefore subject to a transition delay notice,<sup>18</sup> and antennas and feeds that are

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<sup>13</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 299; 47 CFR §§ 27.1412(g)(1)-(2).

<sup>14</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 299; 47 CFR § 27.1412(g)(2).

<sup>15</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, paras. 298-99.

<sup>16</sup> See *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Opens a New Docket and Establishes the Process for C-Band Space Station Operator Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation*, Public Notice, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 21-320, DA 21-957 (WTB Aug. 4, 2021) (*Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN*). The *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* stated that Challenges to a Certification must be filed in GN Docket No. 21-320 within ten (10) days after the Certification is published in ECFS and the eligible space station operators' replies must be filed in that docket within five (5) days. *Id.* at 5. In the *Phase I Incremental Reduction Comment PN*, also released on August 4, 2021, the Bureau sought comment on how different Phase I Certification scenarios would affect both the challenge process and incremental decreases in the ARP. *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on Implementation of the Commission's Incremental Reduction Plan for Phase I Accelerated Relocation Payments*, Public Notice, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 21-320, DA 21-958 (WTB Aug. 4, 2021) (*Phase I Incremental Reduction Comment PN*). The Bureau announced its implementation of the final incremental reduction process on September 29, 2021. *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces Implementation of the Commission's Incremental Reduction Plan for Phase I Accelerated Relocation Payments*, Public Notice, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 21-320, DA 21-1223 (WTB Sept. 29, 2021) (*Phase I Incremental Reduction Plan PN*).

<sup>17</sup> *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 3.

<sup>18</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2455, para. 294; 47 CFR 27.1412(b)(3)(i).

otherwise pending removal from the most recent Incumbent Earth Station list<sup>19</sup> or subject to an agreement regarding the transition between the eligible space station operator and the earth station operator.<sup>20</sup>

6. Each eligible space station operator was required to certify that it attests to the truthfulness of the above information included in its Certification and is making the Certification in good faith.<sup>21</sup>

7. Intelsat submitted its Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation on October 4, 2021 and an amendment on October 15, 2021 (Amendment).<sup>22</sup> The Bureau received no challenges.

8. Intelsat asserts that it has met all the elements required in the *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN*.<sup>23</sup> Specifically, Intelsat certifies that it has completed its Phase I customer migrations and cleared the lower 120 MHz of its C-band operations throughout the contiguous United States.<sup>24</sup> Intelsat further indicates that it “has installed passband filters to block signals from the 3700-3820 MHz band to all of its claimed incumbent earth stations in 46 of the top 50 PEAs.”<sup>25</sup>

9. In its Certification, Intelsat addresses each of the eight criteria set forth in the *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN*. With respect to repacking, Intelsat states that it has completed all customer migrations required for Phase I to clear the lower 120 MHz of C-band operations within the Continental U.S. (CONUS).<sup>26</sup> To this end, Intelsat details the migration completion dates, the technology upgrades it says have been completed, and the pre and post-transition frequencies occupied by each customer.<sup>27</sup> Intelsat specifies seven new replacement C-band satellite payloads as a key element of its overall transition, with construction underway and anticipated launches in 2022 and 2023, but reports that the launch of new satellites was not required to complete its Phase I transition.<sup>28</sup> Intelsat further asserts that it identified certain programmers for technology upgrades, and installed related decoding equipment,

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<sup>19</sup> See *International Bureau Release Updated List of Incumbent Earth Stations in the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band in the Contiguous United States*, IB Docket No. 20-205, GN Docket No. 20-305, Public Notice, DA 21-731 (IB June 22, 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Such agreements may, for example, reflect that the earth station operator, whose station is associated with the eligible space station operator and included on its Transition Plan, has relieved said eligible space station operator of any obligation to effectuate the transition (in whole or in part, as per the agreement) of the subject earth station. *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2457, para. 298; *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 4. The Bureau will determine that a Certification has been made in bad faith if, for example, the certifying party makes a statement that is false and if it finds the party did not use due diligence in providing information that is correct and not misleading to the Commission, including taking appropriate affirmative steps to determine the truthfulness of what is being submitted. *In Re Amend. of Section 1.17 of Commission's Rules Concerning Truthful Statements to Comm'n*, 18 FCC Rcd 4016, 4021 at para. 12 (2003). In cases where it is found that the ARP was disbursed based on a Certification that the eligible space station operator had filed in bad faith, the operator may be subject to the additional consequence of having to return some or all of the ARP, depending on the circumstances. See 47 CFR § 27.1412(a). Certifications are subject to section 1.17 of the Commission's rules. 47 CFR § 1.17.

<sup>22</sup> Intelsat Certification; Intelsat Amendment.

<sup>23</sup> *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> Intelsat Certification at 5, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Intelsat Certification at 2.

<sup>26</sup> Intelsat Certification at 2.

<sup>27</sup> Intelsat Certification at 4-7.

<sup>28</sup> Intelsat Certification at 7-8.

“to reclaim the appropriate amount of bandwidth to clear 120 MHz in Phase I while continuing to deliver ‘same or better’ services to Intelsat’s customers.”<sup>29</sup>

10. Intelsat lists the associated incumbent earth stations, feeds, and antennas claimed as part of its Phase I transition, and provides a description of the relevant migration steps taken and dates completed, in its Certification, Amendment, and related appendices.<sup>30</sup> According to Intelsat, certain associated earth station operators requested to self-install filters; Intelsat asked these operators to submit in writing their intention and to certify to Intelsat that the work has been completed as planned.<sup>31</sup> Intelsat identifies such earth stations, along with their reported completion dates, in Appendix 2.<sup>32</sup>

11. More generally, Intelsat provides dates of completion for its various Phase I transition activities throughout its Certification, Amendment, and related appendices.<sup>33</sup> Intelsat also describes the outreach steps it conducted from May 2020 through September 2021 to identify associated incumbent earth stations, antennas, and feeds relating to its Phase I transition.<sup>34</sup>

12. With respect to variances from its Transition Plan, Intelsat references an agreement with an earth station operator which Intelsat characterizes as relieving it of its transition responsibilities in that case.<sup>35</sup> Intelsat further points to two instances where Intelsat claims the incumbent earth station operators declined the installation of filters.<sup>36</sup> After filing its initial Certification, Intelsat filed an Amendment that it characterizes as addressing “changes and/or error corrections stemming from post-Certification reconciliation of the International Bureau’s (“IB”) Incumbent Earth Station List and Relocation Coordinator’s earth station assignments.”<sup>37</sup>

13. Based on the record presented, the Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation filed by Intelsat on October 4, 2021, and amended on October 15, 2021, is hereby validated.<sup>38</sup> As required in

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<sup>29</sup> Intelsat Certification at 8-9. Intelsat indicates that certain programmers opted to implement and install their own technology upgrades in support of Intelsat’s transition. *Id.* at n.9.

<sup>30</sup> Intelsat Certification at 9-12, Appendix 2, 5. Appendix 4 includes earth stations “for which Intelsat continues to hold provisional claims until they are formally dispositioned by the FCC.” *Id.* at 10, Appendix 4. *See also* Intelsat Amendment. As noted below, if after the disbursement of the ARP, the Bureau subsequently finds that Intelsat should have transitioned these earth stations, Intelsat will be required to complete all Phase I transition work relating to these earth stations.

<sup>31</sup> Intelsat Certification at 12, Appendix 2.

<sup>32</sup> Intelsat Certification at Appendix 2. *See also* Intelsat Amendment.

<sup>33</sup> *See e.g.*, Intelsat Certification at 9, 11, 14-15, Appendix 2, 5. *See also* Intelsat Amendment. Intelsat also reports the completion of other migration steps not specifically addressed by the *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN*, including grooming and other work at its Telemetry, Tracking, and Command (TT&C) sites. Intelsat Certification at 13-15. In its August 2020 Transition Plan, Intelsat previously identified Brewster, WA and Andover, ME as the as the two locations for its future consolidated TT&C operations in CONUS. Intelsat License LLC, Transition Plan, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 20-173 at 22-23 (filed Aug. 14, 2020). While the Bureau hereby determines that, pursuant to paragraph 374 of the *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, the locations of these sites are reasonable, we otherwise make no specific findings as to Intelsat’s TT&C migration activities or performance. *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 2479-80, para. 374.

<sup>34</sup> Intelsat Certification at 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Intelsat Certification at 12.

<sup>36</sup> Intelsat Certification at 12, n.16; Intelsat License LLC, debtor in possession, Transition Plan, GN Docket Nos. 18-122 and 20-173 at 52-53 (filed Sept. 30, 2021).

<sup>37</sup> Intelsat Amendment at 1.

<sup>38</sup> While the Bureau validates Intelsat’s Certification, as amended, in the absence of Challenges or other contrary evidence, we make no specific findings as to its Phase I transition performance. *See, e.g.*, *infra* para. 17. We reiterate that validation of this Phase I Certification, as amended, is without prejudice to any procedures and

(continued....)

the *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN*, if after the disbursement of the ARP, the Bureau subsequently finds that Intelsat should have transitioned additional earth stations, antennas, or feeds regardless of whether or not they were accounted for in its Transition Plan and Certification, Intelsat will be required to complete all Phase I transition work relating to such earth stations, antennas, or feeds in a prompt and effective manner to ensure that the earth stations, antennas or feeds continue to receive substantially the same service that they were able to receive before the transition.<sup>39</sup>

14. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS ORDERED, that, pursuant to sections 1, 4(i), 4(j), 5, and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 154(i), 154(j), 155, 303(r), and the authority delegated pursuant to sections 0.131 and 0.331 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.131, 0.331, this Order IS HEREBY ADOPTED, and the above-captioned Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation is HEREBY VALIDATED.

15. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Relocation Payment Clearinghouse shall promptly notify the 3.7 GHz Service Licensees that the Bureau has validated the above-captioned Phase I Certification of Accelerated Relocation.

16. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the 3.7 GHz Service Licensees shall pay their portion of the relevant Phase I Accelerated Relocation Payment to the Clearinghouse within sixty days of receiving notice from the Clearinghouse, and the Clearinghouse shall disburse the relevant Phase I Accelerated Relocation Payment as set forth in the *3.7 GHz Report and Order* within seven days of receiving the payment from the 3.7 GHz Service Licensees.

17. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Intelsat must complete all Phase I transition work for any earth stations, antennas, or feeds later determined to be associated with Intelsat, regardless of whether they were accounted for in its Transition Plan and Certification, in a prompt and effective manner.

18. This action is taken under delegated authority pursuant to Sections 0.131 and 0.331 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.131, 0.331, and the *3.7 GHz Report and Order*, and is effective on release.

#### FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Joel Taubenblatt  
Acting Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

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processes the Bureau may adopt for Phase II Certifications, or any future showing made by Intelsat in conjunction with Phase II of the ongoing transition of the 3.7 GHz band.

<sup>39</sup> *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 4; see 47 CFR § 27.1412(a). ("Eligible space station operators are responsible for all necessary actions...to migrate the existing services of incumbent earth stations in CONUS to the 4000-4200 MHz band (unless the incumbent earth station opts out of the formal relocation process, per paragraph (e) of this section), as of December 5, 2025. Eligible space station operators that fail to do so will be in violation of the conditions of their license authorization and potentially subject to forfeitures and other sanctions"). The obligation to remediate is independent from, and without prejudice to, any determination that the Certification (or any subsequent remediation effort) was made in bad faith. *Phase I ARP Certification Procedures PN* at 4.