

Media Contact:

Will Wiquist, (202) 418-0509
will.wiquist@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC PROPOSES \$2.8 MILLION FINE AGAINST HOBBYKING FOR
MARKETING NONCOMPLIANT DRONE TRANSMITTERS**

***Drone Video Transmitters Could Apparently Operate in Radio Frequency Bands Not
Designated for Amateur Use & Transmit at Disruptive Power Levels***

WASHINGTON, June 7, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed a \$2.8 million fine against HobbyKing for marketing sixty-five models of devices used to relay video from drones to amateur drone operators which could apparently transmit in unauthorized radio frequency bands, including some that could also operate at excessive transmission power levels. Such unlawful transmissions could interfere with key government and public safety services like aviation systems and weather radar systems.

Through its website HobbyKing.com, HobbyKing markets devices that provide a video link between transmitters mounted on unmanned aircraft systems and users flying drones. While HobbyKing represented that its transmitters operated in designated amateur radio bands, the FCC's investigation found that sixty-five models of devices marketed by HobbyKing could also apparently operate outside those bands. Radio frequency-emitting devices that can operate outside of radio frequency bands designated for amateur use must obtain FCC certification yet the devices in question marketed by HobbyKing apparently were not certified by the Commission.

In addition, amateur equipment used to telecommand model crafts are limited in the power of their radio transmissions. FCC rules limit such signals to 1 Watt (1000mW). Three of the transmitter models included in today's action apparently operate at significantly higher power levels of 1500mW and 2000mW.

Following complaints to the FCC, the Commission's Enforcement Bureau opened an investigation into the company's marketing of radio frequency devices to American consumers in potential violation of the Communications Act and Commission's rules. In response to these complaints, the FCC issued a formal citation to warn the company that it must comply with these requirements. Following further complaints, the Commission [ordered](#) the company to provide information on its marketing of AV transmitters. The law requires companies to respond to requests from the FCC for information and to such FCC orders after being warned of possible violations. Yet, HobbyKing provided no further response.

Today's \$2,861,128 proposed fine, formally called a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, or NAL, contains only allegations that advise a party on how it has apparently violated the law and may set forth a proposed monetary penalty. The Commission may not impose a greater monetary penalty in this case than the amount proposed in the NAL. Neither the allegations nor the proposed sanctions in the NAL are final Commission actions. The party will be given an opportunity to respond and the Commission will consider the party's

submission of evidence and legal arguments before acting further to resolve the matter.

The HobbyKing NAL is available at: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-18-71A1.pdf>.

###

Office of Media Relations: (202) 418-0500

ASL Videophone: (844) 432-2275

TTY: (888) 835-5322

Twitter: @FCC

www.fcc.gov/media-relations

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).