



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Joe Courtney
U.S. House of Representatives
2449 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Courtney:

Thank you for your letter regarding spectrum availability for wireless microphone use. As you know, the spectrum available for all users of the television band in 600 MHz has decreased in recent years, pursuant to the 2012 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. This law required the Commission to repurpose portions of the television band for wireless services and to repack existing users more tightly in the available spectrum.

Nonetheless, I recognize that wireless microphones are an important part of our civic and cultural lives. As you know, they are used widely in theaters and music venues, in film studios, at conventions, at corporate events, in houses of worship, in live news broadcasts, and more. For this reason, the Commission has taken several actions to accommodate the ongoing needs of the users of wireless microphones in both licensed and unlicensed frequencies. In addition, we are continuing to explore ways to enhance wireless microphone spectral efficiency in order to enable more wireless microphone operation.

With respect to MB Docket No. 15-146, on December 8, 2020 the Commission issued a unanimous order declining to adopt rules proposed in 2015 to preserve a vacant channel in the television band for use by white space devices and wireless microphones and as a result terminated this proceeding. In doing so, the Commission noted its support for wireless microphone user operations, including actions taken in multiple separate proceedings over the previous five-year period, and determined that, in light of those other proceedings and the lack of a nationwide solution in MB Docket 15-146, the proposed rules were not the most narrowly-tailored means to support wireless microphone and white space devices. However, wireless microphones and white space devices can continue to operate in white spaces within the television band. In addition, the Commission's Media Bureau sought comment on March 17, 2021 on two Petitions seeking reconsideration of the termination of the proceeding. The Bureau staff is reviewing the record.

Joe

As the Commission's order from 2020 notes, the agency has adopted several changes to ensure spectrum is available for wireless microphones following the Incentive Auction outlined in the 2012 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act and related television band repacking. For instance, the Commission revised its rules to provide more opportunities for licensed wireless microphone users to access spectrum by allowing greater use of the very-high frequency (VHF) channels and providing for closer co-channel operation without the need for coordination where such use poses little risk of causing harmful interference to television service. The

Commission also expanded eligibility for licensed use of the 600 MHz duplex gap to all entities now eligible to hold Part 74 Low Power Auxiliary Station licenses. In addition, it opened up portions of three other sets of spectrum bands for sharing with wireless microphone operations under specified conditions.

Most recently, on April 22, 2021, the Commission adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on proposed rule changes that would allow Wireless Multi-Channel Audio Systems to operate on a licensed basis on frequency bands already authorized for wireless microphone use. This technology could significantly improve the efficiency of wireless microphone operations by potentially allowing as many as three times the number of wireless microphones to operate without increasing the amount of power put out over the air by systems operating under existing rules. This may provide additional options for wireless microphones to ensure they have the spectrum access they need for their operations. The comment period for this rulemaking closes on August 30, 2021 and I look forward to receiving the recommendations from Commission staff after they have reviewed the record.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Rosenworcel