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For Immediate Release**FCC STREAMLINES SATELLITE APPLICATION PROCESSING*****The Space Innovation Agenda Supports U.S. Leadership in the Space Economy***

WASHINGTON, September 21, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted new rules to expedite its processing of space and earth station applications to meet the growing needs of today’s commercial space sector. As communications and other services increasingly rely on advanced space-based technologies, the agency is adjusting its processes to meet the demands of the new Space Age.

The space industry has entered an era of unprecedented growth, which is fueling an increase in both the complexity and the number of applications for space services before the Commission. To keep pace with this rapid change, the Commission is streamlining its policies to expedite the processing of satellite and earth station applications.

These new rules also serve to lay the groundwork for the Space Bureau’s new Transparency Initiative, which will provide information and guidance, in a variety of forms, to potential applicants in order to prepare them to successfully obtain authorizations for space and earth stations—that is, satellites and the ground-based transmitters communicating with them. This initiative will reduce administrative burdens on both applicants and Commission staff and further expedite the processing of applications.

The new rules take concrete steps to expedite the initial processing of applications for authority to operate space and earth stations under part 25 of the Commission’s rules. Today’s Report and Order establishes timeframes for placing space and earth station applications on notice for public comment, permits applicants to apply for authority to operate in frequencies in bands where there is not already an international allocation for the satellite services to be provided, provides flexibility for non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) licensees to have more than one unbuilt system without facing potential dismissal of their applications, and streamlines processing of earth station operators’ requests to add space stations as points of communication.

The FCC will also continue to take public comment on proposals to further improve its processing of space and earth station applications. The proposals include elimination of the procedural burden of printing and maintaining a paper copy of a license, changing the default status of space and earth station proceedings to permit-but-disclose, and a question of whether a process can be implemented for operators of non-U.S. licensed space stations that is similar to special temporary authority (STA). The FCC will also seek comment on other updates to our processes for STA applications, whether to consider a “Permitted List” type of process for NGSO operators, and whether to expand the window for operators to file renewal applications for existing licenses. The FCC also seeks further comment about establishing timeframes or

shot clocks for action on the merits of applications. Additionally, the FCC seeks comment on updating processes to avoid potentially duplicative coordination procedures and, whether the Commission can expand the new auto-granted process for adding satellite points of communication to earth station licenses.

Under the FCC's Space Innovation agenda, the agency established its new Space Bureau, increased the number of staff working on satellite applications, created new opportunities for competition in the delivery of satellite broadband services, and modernized spectrum policy to better meet the needs of the next generation Space Age. As the agency promotes Space Innovation, it also has taken action to advance space safety and responsibility, including the adoption of new rules for deorbiting satellites to mitigate orbital debris risks.

Action by the Commission September 21, 2023 by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-73). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Starks and Simington issuing separate statements.

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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).