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**For Immediate Release****FCC PROPOSES 100% OF MOBILE PHONES BE HEARING AID  
COMPATIBLE*****The Commission Will Take Comment on Next Steps Including Leveraging Advances  
in Bluetooth Technology***

WASHINGTON, December 13, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed that 100% of wireless handsets—namely mobile phones and smartphones—offered for sale in the United States be fully compatible with hearing aids.

The FCC is committed to ensuring that all Americans, including those with hearing loss, are able to access communications services on an equal basis. More than 37.5 million Americans live with hearing loss. Among older Americans it is especially prevalent: nearly a quarter of adults between 65 and 74 and half of adults 75 and older have disabling hearing loss that could benefit from hearing aids. To address these needs and ensure that consumers with hearing loss can take advantage of the wide array of wireless handsets available on the market, the Commission is proposing a plan to fully implement its long-standing goal of achieving 100% wireless handset model hearing aid compatibility (HAC).

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today tentatively concludes that a 100% HAC requirement for wireless handset models offered or imported for use in the United States is achievable. The Commission will also seek comment on adopting a broader definition of HAC that would include the use of Bluetooth connectivity between wireless handsets and hearing aids. The FCC proposes that all wireless handsets have two forms of coupling with hearing aids: 100% must have acoustic coupling and either inductive or Bluetooth coupling.

The Notice explores ways to reach the 100% compatibility benchmark, including proposing a 24-month transition period for handset manufacturers; a 30-month transition period for nationwide service providers; and a 42-month transition period for non-nationwide service providers. Finally, the Notice seeks comment on a number of proposals to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions and to reduce the regulatory burden on manufacturers and service providers.

These proposals build off the recommendations of the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force, which included representatives from device manufacturers, accessibility advocates, wireless services providers, and more.

Action by the Commission December 13, 2023 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-108). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

WT Docket No. 23-388

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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).*