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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of Petition of)
)
DIRECTV ENTERPRISES, INC.) RM No. 9118
)
To Amend Parts 2, 25 and 100)
To Allocate Spectrum for the)
Fixed-Satellite Service and the)
Broadcast-Satellite Service)

COMMENTS OF GE AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

GE American Communications, Inc. ("GE Americom"), by its attorneys and pursuant to Section 1.405 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.405, hereby submits its comments on the above-captioned Petition for Rulemaking, filed June 5, 1997, by DIRECTV Enterprises, Inc. ("DIRECTV Petition"). In the Petition, DIRECTV requests that the Commission amend its rules to provide for the use of the 17.3-17.8 GHz band for broadcast-satellite service ("BSS") and the 24.75-25.25 GHz band for BSS feeder links. DIRECTV also requests that the Commission adopt a 4.5° spacing policy for these bands.

GE Americom supports the allocation of BSS spectrum at 17.3-17.8 GHz and the associated FSS feeder link spectrum at 24.75-25.25 GHz, consistent with the allocations made in WARC-92. Additional spectrum is needed to permit providers to respond to increasing demand for BSS capacity. However, we believe that it is premature to set a spacing policy for this band. Instead, we urge the

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Commission to further study the spacing issue, with the goal of developing a spacing policy that maximizes the efficient use of the orbital arc consistent with interference concerns.

I. THE COMMISSION SHOULD PROPOSE RULES TO ALLOCATE ADDITIONAL SPECTRUM FOR BSS

GE Americom strongly supports the initiation of a rulemaking proceeding to allocate the 17.3-17.8 GHz band for BSS and the 24.75-25.25 GHz band for FSS uplinks to BSS systems. As DIRECTV observes, developments in the BSS market have significantly increased demand for BSS capacity. DIRECTV Petition at 3-4. That demand cannot be met within the constraints of the “Planned BSS Band” at 12.2-12.7 GHz. Specifically, there are only three orbital locations capable of providing quality full-CONUS service in those bands, and the Commission has licensed all channels at those locations. Unless additional capacity is made available, BSS will not be able to achieve its full potential in the United States. The availability of additional bandwidth is essential to permit new applications of BSS technology targeted to meet the needs of both residential and business customers.

In addition, the use of the bands identified in the Petition for BSS is consistent with international allocations. Specifically, in Region 2, BSS feeder links have priority in the 24.75-25.25 GHz band. In addition, the 17.3-17.7 GHz band is allocated in Region 2 for BSS on a co-primary basis. Thus, the allocations

requested in the Petition will meet a demonstrated domestic capacity requirement and are consistent with international frequency planning.

II. FURTHER STUDY OF SPACING REQUIREMENTS IS NEEDED BEFORE THE COMMISSION PROPOSES A SPACING POLICY

However, GE Americom believes it is premature for the Commission to propose spacing requirements for BSS operations in the new band. Further study of this issue is necessary to permit the development of a policy that will optimize use of the spectrum.

DIRECTV proposes that the Commission implement 4.5° for BSS operations in the new bands. It notes that employing 4.5° spacing instead of the 9° spacing used in the Planned BSS Band will at least double the available spectrum resource. DIRECTV Petition at 8. Furthermore, DIRECTV states that 4.5° spacing is consistent with the use of 18-inch receive antennas. *Id.*

GE Americom agrees that in developing a spacing policy for new BSS bands, the Commission should seek to promote competition through optimal use of the orbital arc. For this reason, we believe that further study by the industry and the Commission is needed before a spacing policy is adopted. In particular, interested parties should explore whether spacing satellites less than 4.5° apart would be feasible. Closer spacing would increase the number of orbital locations available and would permit increased opportunities for providers to collocate BSS and FSS spacecraft. Accordingly, further study should be undertaken to determine

whether closer spacing than 4.5° would be technically feasible given potential interference issues raised by the use of small receive antennas.

CONCLUSION

GE Americom respectfully requests that the Commission begin a rulemaking proceeding to allocate the 17.3-17.8 GHz band for BSS downlinks and the 24.75-25.25 GHz band for FSS uplinks to BSS spacecraft. However, the Commission should defer development of a spacing policy for these bands pending further study.

Respectfully submitted,

GE AMERICAN COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

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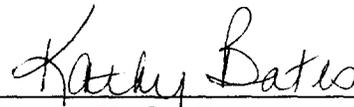
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July 31, 1997

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing Comments of GE American Communications, Inc. was mailed by U.S. first class mail, postage prepaid this 31st day of July, 1997 to:

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