



**VIRGINIA TASK FORCE ONE
INTERNATIONAL URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
September 7, 2000**

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**Ms. Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20554**

**Re: Ultra-Wideband
ET Docket 98-153 /**

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am writing you in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making on ultra-wideband radio. I work for Fairfax County (Virginia) Fire and Rescue Department and Virginia Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue (VATF-1). VATF-1 is made up of personnel from within the Fire and Rescue Department. VATF-1's role has been to save lives in man-made and natural disasters in both the U.S and abroad. VATF-1 is one of two premier Search and Rescue teams sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development and The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to find and rescue people trapped in collapsed buildings. Internationally, we have had the honor to be deployed to earthquakes in Armenia, USSR (1988), Phillippines (1989), Izmit, Tukey (1999), Touliao, Taiwan (1999), Duzce, Turkey (1999) as well as the U.S. Embassy bombing in Nairobi, Kenya (1998). Within the United States and its territories, we fall under the auspices of FEMA and are one of 28 Task Forces. We have been deployed to Hurricane Marilyn (1995), the Oklahoma City bombing of the Murrah building (1995), the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Ga., and Huurricane Fran (1996).

We have worked with numerous Search and Rescue teams from the international community. All teams face the same challenges, the lack of new technology to support our life saving efforts. Because of our experiences, we have had the fortune to be involved in some preliminary testing utilizing Ultra Wideband "through-walls" radar. These preliminary tests have proved very exciting and encouraging. This technology has been

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able to detect slight amounts of movement (a person's chest rising and falling during normal breathing) through several layers of reinforced concrete. This technology could well revolutionize the Search and Rescue field in its capacity to locate victims sooner so that more lives may be saved. The only technology that currently is available are specialized cameras, seismic listening devices and canines. Our work is time crucial, as a buried victim's chances for survival greatly decrease as the clock ticks. Any technology that can help us narrow the time window of locating a trapped victim(s), will give that victim(s) a better chance of surviving. We have had the fortune of saving many lives since VATF-1's inception; however, there has been the occasion when precious moments would have made the difference for victims that we got to just after they expired.

Ultra Wideband position-location tracking technology will prove instrumental in being able to track rescue personnel in collapsed buildings. This is crucial in the event of a structure being further damaged due to an aftershock or the explosion of a secondary device. Fire Departments around the world would benefit tremendously, being able to track firefighters in burning structures or hazardous environments. Trapped or lost firefighters would become minimal and rescue crews would be able to quickly locate those that did become trapped or lost. There is rarely a week that goes by that a firefighter doesn't die due to the above circumstances. The deaths of the firefighters in Worcester, Mass. may have been prevented had this technology been available. Firefighter and rescuer accountability will become as simple as looking at the screen of a laptop by the incident commander.

In closing, I'd like to urge the FCC to expeditiously approve the use of Ultra Wideband technologies for public safety and law enforcement use across the country. The lives of trapped victims, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and rescue workers will most certainly be saved if you quickly approve this technology for the public safety arena.

Sincerely,



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Cc:

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