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8 September 2000

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
455 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

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Re: ET Docket 98-153

Ms. Salas:

I am writing to you in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making on Ultra Wideband technology on behalf of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (ICHIEFS). Established in 1873, ICHIEFS represents a network of more than 12,000 chief fire and emergency officers. Our members are among the world's leading experts in fire fighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters and search & rescue.

Among ICHIEFS' leading concerns and fundamental goals is the investment in, and improvement of firefighter safety. Last year was a terrifying year in terms of firefighter casualties: 112 U.S. firefighters died in the line of duty, an increase of 21 deaths from the previous year. The nation's fire fighting community was particularly hard struck by the death of six fellow firefighters in one fire in Worcester, Massachusetts. It is for this compelling reason -- the safety and well being of firefighters -- that ICHIEFS strongly supports advances in technology, like ultra wideband (UWB), that offer promising developments in improving in firefighter safety and emergency coordination.

From what we have read and seen, UWB enabled devices could help police, fire, and rescue personnel greatly improve their coordination at the scene of an emergency, as well as locate disaster victims trapped in burning buildings or buried in rubble. Additionally, ultra wideband based could form the technological backbone of new products designed to enable real time tracking of fire and rescue personnel inside a burning building, and could provide solutions to the public service community's increasing need for scarce interference-free radio frequencies.

Although the extent to which ultra wideband will save firefighters' lives is unknown, the technology's promise is undeniable. I urge the Commission to approve the use of ultra wideband technologies for the benefit of the safety of fire and emergency service personnel and for public safety in general. We appreciate your attention to this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Garry L. Briese, CAE
Executive Director

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