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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Katherine Harris

Secretary of State

DIVISION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

October 27, 2000

Magalie Roman Salas
 Secretary, FCC
 455 12th St. SW
 Washington, DC 20554

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FCC

Re: Ultra-Wideband (ET Docket 98-153)

Dear Ms. Salas,

I am writing on behalf of Florida's Public Libraries and the American Library Association (ALA) in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on ultra-wideband radio. I believe this technology has tremendous potential for libraries, allowing the fast and flexible networking of buildings at relatively low costs.

Public libraries in Florida are experiencing a need for more and more bandwidth to support new computer based library information services. This demand is a consequence of the E-Rate which has brought more and more library patrons seeking to use publicly accessible computers in libraries. As well, the demand for more bandwidth is driven by the library's need to offer access to more sophisticated computer based library information resources such as virtual & digital libraries, commercial databases, and distance learning applications. To make full use of these applications it is necessary to bring affordable, high capacity bandwidth to each library's public workstation.

Ultra-wideband's local wireless networking potential is of particular interest to libraries, who seek to bring access to information to all Americans. UWB has the potential to provide low-cost, high-speed, unlicensed wireless devices for local area networking. This technology holds tremendous potential for thousands of libraries in Florida and around the nation which are located in older buildings (such as the traditional Carnegie libraries) where traditional wired networking is either impossible, extremely expensive, and/or poses health risks from asbestos and other factors. Even with the extensive benefits of the E-rate, many libraries are unable to afford the high costs of local area networking because of the high cost of retrofitting infrastructure to an existing building. A wireless local area networking alternative like UWB, however, would be both cost-effective and easy to set up, making it perfect for these otherwise difficult to serve locations.

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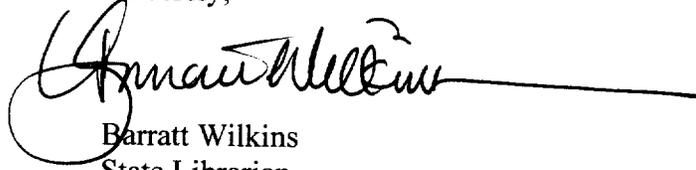
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We understand that some applications of UWB technologies may pose minimal levels of interference with certain public safety signals, such as those used in GPS in airplanes. We urge the FCC to move forward judiciously in dealing with those applications. However, it is apparent that some devices which operate above 2 GHz – including UWB local area networking technologies – do not threaten to interfere with existing wireless technologies. We strongly urge the Commission to move forward in licensing UWB and certifying UWB products and making them widely available to schools/libraries throughout the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barratt Wilkins", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Barratt Wilkins
State Librarian

BW/L