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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Barbara Kreisman, Chief - Video Services Division
Room 2-A665 – Mass Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: FCC 00-455, ET Docket No. 00-258, RM-9920 and 9911

ORIGINAL

February 20, 2001

Dear Ms. Kreisman:

I am writing this letter to you with the utmost of urgency on behalf of Chemeketa Community College to express our concern about a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Proposed Rule Making that will have an immediate and disastrous impact on our ability to meet a growing demand among Oregon students for accessible, flexible educational opportunities. The FCC has issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ET Docket No. 00-258, RM-9920 and 9911) seeking comment on a plan to relinquish Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) channels to cellular phone companies for third generation (3G) mobile telephone services, stripping Chemeketa Community College and thousands of other schools across the nation of a powerful and irreplaceable medium.

ITFS is an important part of Chemeketa's goal to share educational resources among schools and to provide distance learning opportunities and workforce training directly to students at home, at work, and at neighborhood learning centers. Chemeketa has used ITFS technology since 1987 to deliver college courses and training to students in our college district. During an academic term, Chemeketa uses approximately 120 hours per week of ITFS delivery; statistics for spring term 2000 through winter term 2001 show over 2,500 enrollments in courses and training delivered via ITFS. Moreover, ITFS is absolutely critical if wireless broadband is to become a reality not only for our students but also for our entire community.

School districts, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations across the country hold thousands of ITFS licenses, many of which were issued decades ago. Recent FCC rule changes have expanded the educational power of ITFS from one-way video to interactive video, wireless broadband Internet access and advanced learning services to students and adult learners in classrooms, homes and workplaces. ITFS now offers educational institutions throughout the country an affordable high-speed on-ramp to the Internet, a mission that was recently cited as the first priority for policymakers by the bipartisan Congressional Web-Based Education Commission. In addition, fixed wireless broadband promises to bring a competitor to DSL and cable modem technologies to our

4000 LANCASTER DRIVE NE P.O. BOX 14007 SALEM, OREGON 97309-7070 PHONE 503-399-5000

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community, making broadband access not only more widely available but also more affordable.

Chemeketa Community College is at the forefront of advancing the new learning services made possible by recent FCC rule changes and we have invested a great deal of time and resources to develop the ITFS spectrum for educational outreach in our college district and in Oregon. Chemeketa Community College is an active member of the Oregon Wireless Instructional Network (Oregon WIN), a consortium of nine universities and community colleges that operates a multi-channel ITFS network in Oregon's Willamette Valley capable of serving over 65% of Oregon's population. The consortium operates under an Intergovernmental Agreement, is governed by a seven-member board, and works closely with educational ITFS licensees in Bend and Medford, Oregon (see attached list of Oregon ITFS licensees).

Oregon WIN was formed in 1993 for the purpose of jointly developing the ITFS spectrum in Oregon as a much needed "last mile" network solution. The consortium recently completed a $1.8 million network after spending years filing for ITFS licenses, building the consortium, issuing a national RFP for a commercial partner to develop the spectrum and designing an interconnected, shared network. Oregon WIN operates three ITFS transmission sites in Eugene, Salem and Portland. The sites are linked with multiple, two-way microwave paths, allowing educational providers to serve all three ITFS networks from a single location. Inexpensive ITFS receive antennas are easily installed directly to schools, government offices, businesses and homes. The flexible system allows the delivery of a diverse range of programs including live interactive courses, telecourses, information boards, and cultural events. Oregon WIN members, participating members, and associated institutions offer over 2500 distance learning courses in 65 degree programs (http://oregonone.org) to over 29,000 students per year. The Oregon WIN ITFS network is of growing importance in meeting Oregon's distance education needs. With the imminent rollout of two-way broadband data services over the ITFS spectrum, Oregon WIN will provide the full range of video, data and Internet services critical to quality distance education programs and services provided by Oregon's universities and community colleges.

In addition to meeting important, "last mile" networking needs, ITFS is attractive because system development occurs by partnering with the private sector. Through an excess capacity lease agreement with Sprint Corporation, Oregon WIN members are able to focus their resources on educational programming and services and not on telecommunication infrastructure development and operations. FCC rulings over the past ten years have greatly improved the ability for educators and commercial operators to form successful partnerships in the development of the ITFS spectrum. Working in conjunction with wireless communications companies, ITFS is helping to bring broadband to underserved populations in rural, urban and otherwise isolated communities nationwide. ITFS licensees are therefore serving the educational community as they help the nation bridge the Digital Divide.

If the FCC reallocates any part of the ITFS spectrum for 3G mobile device services, the Oregon WIN partnership and network will collapse. Oregon WIN members would either lose their ITFS service altogether or face new equipment costs, service disruption and signal interference. In addition, Oregon WIN would lose our partnership with the private sector and face the prohibitive costs of re-building and operating the network. The spectrum would no longer be available for advanced wireless broadband services to the educational community and to underserved communities nationwide.

As a result of the critical need in Oregon for "last mile," broadband services and our extensive planning and financial investment in developing the ITFS spectrum for educational outreach, Chemeketa Community College strongly opposes any reallocation of the ITFS spectrum to 3G mobile device services. Reallocation under FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ET Docket No. 00-258, RM-9920 and 9911) is counter to recent FCC rulings which allow educators to fully and effectively develop the spectrum for educational use, and is counter to many local, state and national reports calling for increased access to broadband services to provide educational opportunities to students anywhere, at anytime. If the ITFS spectrum is compromised, these public benefits will be lost. We at Chemeketa Community College hope that you will support us in maintaining the integrity of our spectrum and in keeping this tremendous educational resource alive and well. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gerard Berger, President
Chemeketa Community College

Oregon ITFS Licensees

Institution and Contact	Call Signs
Chemeketa Community College Donna Carver Distance Learning Programs P.O. Box 14007 4000 Lancaster Dr. NE Salem OR 97309 503-399-5191 Fax: 503-399-5214 e-mail:donnac@chemeketa.edu	**Salem – A Group – WHR - 771**
Lane Community College Cynde Leathers, Coordinator Distance Learning Programs 4000 East 30th Ave Eugene, OR 97405 (541) 726-2260 FAX: 744-3974 E-Mail: leathersc@lanecc.edu	**Eugene - D Group - WNC 487**
Linn-Benton Community College Paul Snyder, Department Chair Distance Learning & Media Services 6500 SW Pacific Blvd. Albany, OR 97321 (541) 917-4640 FAX: 917-4659 E-Mail: snyderp@gw.lbcc.cc.or.us	**Eugene - G Group - WNC 540**
Linn/Benton/Lincoln ESD Paul A. Yeiter Instructional Technology and Arts Specialist 905 4th Avenue Southeast Albany, OR 97321 (541) 967-8822 ext.2649 Fax: (541) 926-6047 E-mail: paul_yeiter@lblesd.k12.or.us	**Participating Institution**
Oregon Public Broadcasting Mike Tondreau VP of Engineering 7140 SW Macadam Ave. Portland OR 97219 503 293-1927 Fax: 503 293-4877 e-mail: Mike_Tondreau@opb.org	**Portland – A Group – WHR 543**

Oregon State University
Larry Pribyl, Co-Director
Communication Media Center
The Valley Library
Corvallis, OR 97331-4504
(541) 737-3817 FAX: 737-8244
Email: Larry.Pribyl@orst.edu

Salem - C Group - WNC 718
Eugene - A Group - WNC 527

Oregon University System
John Greydanus, Director
OUS Distance Learning Programs
P.O. Box 3175
Susan Campbell Hall, U of O Campus
Eugene, OR 97403
Office: (541) 346-5705 Fax:(541) 346-5764
E-Mail: john_greydanus@ous.edu

Salem - B Group - WNC -471
Eugene - C Group - WNC 574
Medford - D Group – WNC 771

Portland Community College
John Sneed, Director
Distance Learning Programs
P.O. Box 19000
12000 SW 49th Street
Portland OR 97219
503 977-4398 Fax: 503 977-4260
e-mail:jsneed@pcc.edu

Portland – B 1-2 – WHR 746
Portland – B3 - WLX 237

Portland State University
Mark Kramer, Director
Instructional and Research
P.O Box 751
Portland, OR 97207
(503)725-9103 FAX: 725-3476
E-Mail: kramerm@pdx.edu

Salem - D Group - WNC 470

Southern Oregon University
Kevin Talbert
Chief Information Officer
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, OR 97520
(541) 552-6903 Fax: (541) 552-6210
E-Mail: talbert@sou.edu

Medford – G Group – WNC 759

University of Oregon
Tom Matney, Director
Media Services, Knight Library
Eugene, OR 97403
(541) 346-1947 FAX: 346-1872
Email: tmatney@darkwing.uoregon.edu

Eugene - B Group - WNC 526

Western Oregon University
Alan Heywood, Director
Educational Media
Monmouth, OR 97361-1394
(503) 838-8958 Fax (503) 838-8474
E:mail: heywooa@wou.edu

Salem - G Group - WNC 717

Central Oregon Community College
Lee Rayburn
Chief Information Officer
2600 NW College Way
Bend, OR 97701
(541) 383-7247 FAX: (541) 317-3071
E-Mail: lrayburn@cocc.edu

Bend – D Group – WNC 815

Crook/Deschutes Education Service District
Lee Chapman, Superintendent
Crook/Deschutes ESD
1340 NW Wall Street
Bend OR 97701
(541) 923-8900

Bend – B Group – WNC 814

Bend/LaPine School District
Don Fischer
Bend/LaPine School District
Technology Support Center
(541) 383-6031

Bend – Group A – WNC 816