

ORIGINAL



BOARD OF REGENTS
OF THE
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

RECEIVED

MAR - 7 2001

PHONE (404) 656-2202
FAX (404) 657-6979

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
270 WASHINGTON STREET, S.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 21, 2001

Chairman Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Re: FCC ET Docket 00-258

February 15, 2001

Dear Chairman Powell:

I write to you concerning the future of the ITFS spectrum, with specific regards to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on 3G that was released January 5, 2001. ITFS is both a critical part of the development of our educational infrastructure and an essential bridge over the Digital Divide. Here in Georgia, ITFS is a vital tool for making high speed wireless broadband access a reality for our students and for our citizenry in general, especially for those in rural areas. ITFS cannot and should not be relegated to second-class status in favor of the promise of 3G wireless services.

As you are aware, recent rule changes have opened the ITFS spectrum to the possibility of wireless two-way video and broadband data services, including high speed Internet access. The educational power of ITFS has expanded to provide advanced learning services, interactive video, and wireless broadband Internet, and ITFS licensees are scrambling to deploy two-way digital services. Furthermore, as distance learning becomes more robust and interactive, ITFS offers educational institutions throughout the country an affordable high-speed on-ramp to the broadband Internet, a goal that was recently cited as the top educational technology priority for policymakers by the bipartisan Web-Based Education Commission co-chaired by Representative Johnny Isakson from Georgia. Equally important, fixed wireless broadband promises to bring a competitor to DSL and cable modem technologies to our community, making broadband access not only more widely available but also more affordable.

No. of Copies rec'd _____
List ABCDE

Chairman Michael K. Powell
February 21, 2001
Page Two

Georgia, the largest state east of the Mississippi, has been blessed with tremendous growth in the last decade. However, much of the growth in our educated workforce has been imported, a model that cannot be sustained. Along with the Governor and the Legislature, the Board of Regents and the thirty-four institutions that comprise the University System have embarked on a concerted campaign to create a more educated Georgia. A key component of our plans involves the effective application of educational technologies at all levels that rely heavily on access to online resources. Working in conjunction with commercial partners, use of the ITFS spectrum for broadband data services will contribute substantially to access in a mostly rural state where wired infrastructure does not exist and where its installation is too slow and costly to meet our needs.

If the Commission reallocates all or part of the ITFS spectrum for 3G mobile device services, the capacity, usefulness, and value of ITFS would be significantly diminished. Even if only part of the spectrum is taken away, many educational institutions would lose their ITFS service altogether, while others would face new equipment costs, service disruption and cutbacks, lower quality of service and signal interference. Most importantly, in either scenario, the ITFS community would almost certainly be incapable of supporting advanced wireless services and promoting the development of broadband services to the educational community and to underserved communities nationwide.

If the ITFS spectrum is compromised in any way, our educational infrastructure will be threatened and our Digital Divide widened. The University System of Georgia hopes that you will maintain the integrity of the ITFS spectrum and keep this tremendous resource available to create a more educated America.

Sincerely,



Stephen R. Portch
Chancellor
University System of Georgia

Cc: Commissioner Furchgott-Roth
Commissioner Ness
Commissioner Tristani