



October 13, 2023

**BY ELECTRONIC FILING**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *GN Docket No. 23-135, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20231002-00240, ICFS File No. SAT-MOD-20230207-00021, Call Sign S3069*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Earlier this year the Commission unanimously determined that rapidly processing direct-to-cellular applications while it considers long-term rules would serve the public interest by facilitating testing and deployment of innovative supplemental coverage capabilities for American consumers.<sup>1</sup> As Chairwoman Rosenworcel has stated, the Commission should “make it easier for satellite operators collaborating with terrestrial mobile providers to obtain authorization for converged services” because these services can provide “connectivity suitable for emergency calls and texts in remote settings where terrestrial networks do not reach.”<sup>2</sup> In furtherance of this strong public interest, SpaceX recently applied for special temporary authority (“STA”) to accelerate its deployment by testing its direct-to-cellular payload in conjunction with fast-approaching launches of its first supplemental coverage satellites.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, now that SpaceX is on the cusp of reaching the Chairwoman’s goals by deploying a system that will finally bring ubiquitous connectivity across the country, AT&T and DISH-mouthpiece the Rural Wireless Association (“RWA”) have seemingly coordinated a desperate, 11<sup>th</sup>-hour campaign to prevent it. In their recent letters, AT&T and RWA raise a series of baseless procedural claims while offering no substantive reason to deny the application.<sup>4</sup> The Commission should reject AT&T’s and RWA’s oppositions and swiftly grant SpaceX’s STA to begin testing a system that can enable emergency connectivity in otherwise unserved areas.

---

<sup>1</sup> *See Single Network Future: Supplemental Coverage from Space*, FCC 23-22, ¶ 43 (rel. Mar. 17, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman, Keynote Address to Mobile World Congress: “Leadership for Future Connectivity,” 3-4 (Feb. 27, 2023), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-391271A1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *See Request for Special Temporary Authority*, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20231002-00240 (Oct. 2, 2023) (“STA Request”).

<sup>4</sup> *See Letter from Michael P. Goggin to Marlene H. Dortch*, GN Docket No. 23-135 and ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20231002-00240 (Oct. 10, 2023) (“AT&T Letter”); *Letter from Carri Bennet to Marlene H. Dortch*, GN Docket No. 23-135, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20231002-00240, ICFS File No. SAT-MOD-20230207-00021 (Oct. 12, 2023) (“RWA Letter”).

AT&T and RWA appear to confuse their policy preferences for established Commission rules and procedures. AT&T apparently would prefer all direct-to-cellular activities to run exclusively through the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (“WTB”), or otherwise be processed as experimental proposals by the Office of Engineering and Technology.<sup>5</sup> RWA’s me-too filing parrots AT&T’s request to process SpaceX’s request through OET.<sup>6</sup> But AT&T and RWA ignore the clear Commission rules that permit the Space Bureau—in consultation with WTB—to grant SpaceX’s STA. Section 25.120 of the Commission’s rules permits an operator with a pending application for regular authority to apply for a 60-day STA, as SpaceX has done here, and the Commission has regularly approved STAs with underlying applications requesting waivers.<sup>7</sup> Thus, AT&T is wrong that SpaceX would need to request and receive a litany of procedural waivers before receiving the STA.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, AT&T’s evident concern with SpaceX’s request that the Commission “confirm that [SpaceX] is authorized to use the PCS G Block spectrum licensed to T-Mobile consistent with” the parties’ spectrum manager lease is misplaced.<sup>9</sup> This request was meant to confirm the limitations of SpaceX’s ability to operate in the spectrum, not to prejudge its rights to do so. Indeed, the STA request specifically recognizes “that Commission grant of the STA does not prejudice the Commission’s further consideration of its direct-to-cell application.”<sup>10</sup>

Nor does AT&T or RWA challenge the public interest in granting SpaceX’s STA. In fact, both letters acknowledge the value in allowing SpaceX to expeditiously test its direct-to-cellular capabilities.<sup>11</sup> Further, an STA would be technically identical to an experimental license, presenting no increased risk of harmful interference—indeed, no harmful interference risk at all—to other spectrum users. The STA request explains that SpaceX would operate *only* on a non-interference, non-protected basis pursuant to relevant Part 24 and Part 25 rules and consistent with its underlying application. And contrary to AT&T’s and RWA’s claims, SpaceX has backed up this commitment with “robust technical demonstrations” showing that its operations will not cause

---

<sup>5</sup> The Commission may ultimately determine that WTB should process applications for hybrid terrestrial/space operations such as supplemental coverage from space. That concept finds support in the SCS rulemaking record among wireless and satellite operators alike, and SpaceX has explained why treating SCS as part of the Mobile Service would serve the public interest. But the Commission should decide this procedural issue as a part of the rulemaking, and should not use it as an excuse to delay rapid deployment of services that can benefit consumers now.

<sup>6</sup> See RWA Letter at 1.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Grant, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20211216-00195 (Apr. 28, 2022) (granting an STA during the pendency of an application requesting waivers of the U.S. Table of Frequency Allocations and other rules); Grant in Part, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20171104-00149 (Nov. 16, 2017) (granting an STA during the pendency of an application requesting waivers of the U.S. Table of Frequency Allocations, station-keeping requirements, and other rules); Grant, ICFS File No. SAT-STA-20110318-00057 (Mar. 21, 2011) (granting an STA during the pendency of an application requesting a waiver of the Commission’s orbital debris rules).

<sup>8</sup> Even if the rules did require such waiver requests, SpaceX implicitly included them because its STA request relies on the terms of SpaceX’s underlying application for regular authority. See STA Request at 1 and n.2.

<sup>9</sup> See AT&T Letter at 1.

<sup>10</sup> STA Request at 2.

<sup>11</sup> See AT&T Letter at 1; RWA Letter at 1.

harmful interference to any in-band, out-of-band, or cross-border users.<sup>12</sup> AT&T and RWA have not even attempted to refute this evidence. Moreover, SpaceX noted in its STA request that “in the extremely unlikely event that harmful interference” occurs, it “will take all reasonable steps to eliminate” it, further reducing the risk to existing users.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, no technical reason exists to deny SpaceX’s request.

SpaceX urges the Commission to dismiss AT&T’s and RWA’s arguments and expeditiously grant SpaceX’s STA request.

Sincerely,

*/s/ David Goldman*

David Goldman  
Vice President, Satellite Policy

SPACE EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGIES CORP.  
1155 F Street, NW  
Suite 475  
Washington, DC 20004  
Tel: 202-649-2641  
Email: [David.Goldman@SpaceX.com](mailto:David.Goldman@SpaceX.com)

---

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Letter from David Goldman to Marlene H. Dortch, GN Docket No. 23-135 and ICFS File No. SAT-MOD-20230207-00021, Attachment B (July 26, 2023) (summarizing non-interference showings).

<sup>13</sup> STA Request at 2.