January 14, 2013

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC  20554

Re: Comments of MOBILE SATELLITE USERS ASSOCIATION
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau RM-11685

Dear Ms. Dortch,

The Mobile Satellite Users Association (“MSUA”)\(^1\) hereby files these Comments in response to the Petition for Rulemaking submitted by Globalstar on November 13, 2012 and the Commission’s notice of November 30, 2012 inviting comment under the above-captioned proceeding.

In its recent proceeding proposing changes to the 2 GHz band, the Commission noted that “each MSS Band is differently situated” and that it was taking a “band-specific approach.”\(^2\) As MSUA highlighted within its Comments filed in that proceeding, there is very substantial and critical use of the L-band and Big LEO bands for Mobile Satellite Services, which makes it essential for the Commission to continue this band-specific approach. In particular, MSUA is concerned to ensure that operators continue to provide MSS services in the L-band and Big LEO band to meet these critical needs, and to take advantage of the advanced MSS capabilities that have resulted from the billions of dollars of investment made in new MSS satellites over the last decade, which in some cases were based in large part on the ATC regulatory framework put in place by the Commission.

MSUA recognizes Globalstar’s development in recent years of several highly innovative, lifesaving MSS services, such as its SPOT messenger devices, upon which hundreds of thousands of consumers in the United States (and internationally) rely for safety critical

\(^1\) MSUA is a non-profit association created for, and dedicated to, promoting and safeguarding the interests of users of mobile satellite communications worldwide. While other associations and trade groups may promote the interests of spacecraft suppliers, equipment vendors, and the like, MSUA is focused specifically on representing the interests of users. MSUA performs its functions on behalf of its members by fostering greater communications and information exchange among and between mobile satellite system users, suppliers of equipment and services, operators of MSS satellite systems, financial markets, and various government entities that can impact the future of MSS services to its members. In addition, MSUA provides a means of assembling the views of MSS users on system and service concerns and for conveying these concerns to the appropriate authorities. Additional information about MSUA can be found at http://www.msua.org/.

services in hazardous environments. For example, Globalstar indicated in a recent press release\(^3\) that the family of SPOT messenger devices has now been responsible for over 2000 rescues since its introduction in 2007, an average of more than one rescue per day. Globalstar also offers handheld and fixed satellite phone services to well over 100,000 subscribers, many of them located in the United States, and plans to introduce more capable higher speed data services with its second generation satellite system, into which over $1 billion has been invested.

MSUA requests that the Commission ensure that any terrestrial services offered in the Big LEO band do not cause interference to existing and planned satellite services in either the Big LEO band or adjacent frequency bands. If this can be achieved, then MSUA hopes and expects that additional benefits will accrue to current and future MSS users. Thus MSUA believes that if terrestrial spectrum rights are granted to Globalstar then the Commission should ensure that these authorizations remain under common ownership with Globalstar’s satellite system, in order to prevent interference to Globalstar satellite users from terrestrial operations, and should be conditioned upon the continued provision of “substantial” satellite services. Otherwise MSUA believes there is a risk that at some point in the future the terrestrial spectrum rights could be decoupled from Globalstar’s satellite system, and potentially could thereafter restrict Globalstar’s ability to develop and provide MSS services in the public interest.

Please contact the undersigned with any questions regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Farrar
MSUA President

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