

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

Removing Cuba from) IB Docket No. 15-289
the Exclusion List)

COMMENTS OF AT&T SERVICES INC.

AT&T Services Inc., on behalf of its affiliates, (“AT&T”) submits the following comments in response to the Public Notice requesting comments on removing Cuba from the Commission’s Exclusion List for International Section 214 Authorizations (Exclusion List).¹ AT&T supports the removal of Cuba from the Exclusion List, which would help foster competition for bilateral communications between the United States and Cuba. AT&T also supports the Commission taking further steps to encourage such competition by removing the non-discrimination requirements (including section 63.22(f) of the Commission’s rules) that apply to the U.S.-Cuba route, the last U.S. international route subject to such regulation.

The Public Notice has been issued pursuant to policy guidance from the State Department to the Commission regarding the licensing of telecommunications services between the United States and Cuba.² The State Department notes that on December 17, 2014, the President announced that the United States will chart a new course in relations with Cuba, including measures to enhance the free flow of information to, from, and among the Cuban people.³ In

¹ Public Notice, DA 15-1354, rel. Nov. 24, 2015 (“Public Notice”).

² See Letter dated October 26, 2015 to Tom Wheeler, Chairman, FCC, from Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda, U.S. Coordinator for International Communications & Information Policy, U.S. Department of State (“Department of State Letter”).

³ *Id.* at 1.

support of this, the State Department has accordingly stated that Cuba will be treated similarly to all other international section 214 applications.⁴ The State Department has advised that the Commission should remove Cuba from the Exclusion List for International Section 214 Authorizations, and allow all carriers to provide telecommunications services between the U.S. and Cuba pursuant to global section 214 authority under section 63.18(e)(1) of the Commission's rules.⁵ The Public Notice proposes to implement this guidance and thereby allow carriers with existing global section 214 authority to provide telecommunications services between the United States and Cuba without seeking additional authority.⁶

AT&T supports this proposal, and encourages a rapid implementation. Carriers with global section 214 authority may provide service today to all countries except Cuba. Providing the same treatment for service to Cuba by removing this country from the Exclusion List would help foster competition for bilateral communications between the United States and Cuba, and thus increase the flow of information to and from the Cuban people.

AT&T also hopes that the Commission will soon take the additional step to modify the licensing of telecommunications services between the United States and Cuba, as recommended by the State Department, to remove nondiscrimination requirements on the U.S.-Cuba route, including section 63.22(f) of the Commission's rules.⁷ This additional modification would

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 1-2.

⁶ Public Notice at 2.

⁷ *See* State Department Letter at 2. *See also*, Public Notice, Modification of Process Regarding the Licensing of Telecommunications Services Between the United States and Cuba, DA 15-1274, rel. Nov. 9, 2015, at 2 (stating that the Commission will begin the process of removing these requirements).

similarly extend to the U.S.-Cuba route the same regulatory treatment that applies to all other international routes today. This change would further encourage competition for bilateral communications between the United States and Cuba by allowing U.S. carriers to enter into market-based arrangements on the U.S.-Cuba route.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ James J. R. Talbot

James J. R. Talbot
Gary L. Phillips
David L. Lawson

Attorneys for
AT&T Services Inc.
1120 20th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 457-3048 (phone)
(202) 457-3073 (fax)

Dated: December 4, 2015