May 10, 2017

Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly

c/o Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: ET Docket No. 14-165 and GN Docket Nos. 12-268 and 14-166

Dear Chairman Pai, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner O’Rielly and Ms. Dortch:

As the Commission reviews the results of the spectrum auctions, we write to stress the importance of wireless microphones to the performing arts which rely on this efficient and reliable technology. The Commission ruled in 2014 that performing arts entities regularly using 50 or more wireless devices would be eligible to apply for a Part 74 license and would have access to a database which protects against interference. This decision was a move in the right direction and protects some large events and performances against interference from White Space devices.

However, the Commission also made database registration unavailable to performing arts entities utilizing fewer than 50 devices on a regular basis. Unfortunately, this would leave major not-for-profit regional theatres, and our nation’s symphony orchestras, opera companies, dance companies, presenting organizations and educational entities without interference protection against White Space devices. We urge that the Commission develop rules which preserve the quality and integrity of wireless microphones used in the performing arts. We hope you will keep in mind the following sectors that depend heavily on wireless microphones:

· **Live Performing Arts Events:** Performing arts venues rely on wireless microphones to transmit crystal-clear songs and dialogue to the audience. Because wireless microphones are small, they can be unobtrusively hidden in performers’ costumes. Wireless devices are also used backstage by stagehands to govern the operations of a production. They mitigate safety hazards and protect performers, stagehands and audiences from harm. Also, hearing-impaired patrons may rely on listening devices that operate in White Space. For these reasons, many large venues have invested in dozens of wireless microphones. For instance, the Shakespeare Theatre Company uses approximately 30 wireless microphones and instruments for a single performance.
New Stage Theatre in Jackson, MS, uses up to 25 wireless devices for on stage amplification in musicals and 4 to 8 wireless devices for backstage communication.

- **Music industry:** From Nashville to Las Vegas, from large arenas to small clubs, wireless microphones and in-ear monitors are vital to musical artists in the creation and presentation of music. Wireless microphone technology is ubiquitous in the music industry and makes both concerts and studio sessions possible. Any FCC decision that impaired the ability of the music industry to use wireless technology would severely impact featured artists, musicians, record companies, venue operators, and fans.

Further, the Commission already ordered that wireless microphone operations vacate the 700 MHz band of the broadcast spectrum in 2010. To comply, many of these not-for-profit institutions made considerable investments to replace their sound equipment. When the Commission reassigns spectrum from broadcast to wireless licensees, forcing the wireless operations of many of these entities to move again, we urge the Commission to offer as much transition time as possible and seek to minimize the financial impact on not-for-profit professional and educational entities.

The Commission has already eliminated the two designated channels it had previously set aside for wireless microphones – an action that, along with the reduced white space following repacking, will increase the likelihood of interference for wireless microphone users. Now, the only remaining interference protection mechanism is registration in the database – denying access to professional not-for-profit and educational performing arts institutions would leave these entities vulnerable to interference and unable to properly serve the public. This decision would be harmful both to the performing arts and to new White Space devices. Interference protection would serve to protect both of these industries.

In light of the overwhelming benefits of wireless microphones, the decreased available spectrum, and the increased potential of interference, we urge you to retain the ability of wireless microphones in the performing arts to register in the database.

Thank you for considering this matter, and we look forward to working with you to promote the development and use of vital communication technologies such as wireless microphones.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter  
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus  
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance  
Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus  
Member of Congress