

April 7, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20536

Chairman Wheeler:

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should proceed with caution before approving IB Docket No. 13-213 *Terrestrial Use of the 2473-2495 MHz Band for Low-Power Mobile Broadband Networks* Notice of Proposed Rulemaking due to concerns that have been raised by multiple stakeholders regarding its potential impact on individuals with hearing loss. As members of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus, we are extremely concerned over the unintentional consequences that could occur if this proposal is not thoroughly reviewed.

Specifically, the FCC is requested to verify that any proposed rulemaking authority should contain sufficient technical data to demonstrate that any change will not unduly harm the availability of Bluetooth for hearing assistance devices. Currently, wireless technology allows individuals with hearing loss to connect their hearing aids or other assistive listening devices to Bluetooth technology through their smartphones. Allowing companies to enter a new section of the wireless band could needlessly impact consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing. The federal government should not stifle new and emerging innovations in order to benefit one particular company or industry.

Additionally, in previous meetings before the Commission, only demonstrations took place to illustrate a lack of interference - not actual testing. Given the innovativeness of Bluetooth technology, it is imperative that actual testing take place to determine the security of the proposed technology.

As the FCC finalizes its decision in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, we remain concerned over the unintended consequences that this proposal will impose on individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


David B. McKinley, P.E.
Congressional Hearing Caucus, Co-Chair
Member of Congress


Mike Thompson
Congressional Hearing Caucus, Co-Chair
Member of Congress