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September 21, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

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

Re: *Ex Parte Notice – Improvements to Benchmarks and Related Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets, WT Docket No. 15-285; Amendment of the Commission’s Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets, WT Docket No. 20-3.*

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On September 19, 2023, representatives from the ATIS Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force (“HAC Task Force”) spoke with Jonathan Campbell, Acting Legal Advisor for Wireless, International and Space to Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel regarding the pending Waiver Request and the HAC Task Force Report and Recommendations in the above-captioned dockets.¹ A list of meeting attendees is attached to this letter.

With the approaching December 5, 2023 compliance deadline,² timely grant of the Waiver Request will keep the industry on the path to achieving 100% HAC for wireless handsets, while also incorporating testing to ensure that handsets have volume control. Record support for the Waiver Request is unanimous.³ After the several meetings with FCC staff, the HAC Task

¹ See *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on ATIS Waiver Request on Behalf of the Covered Entities of the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force*, Public Notice, WT Docket No. 20-3, DA 23-250 (WTB rel. Mar. 23, 2023); see also *Petition of ATIS on Behalf of the Covered Entities of the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force for Limited, Interim Waiver*, WT Docket Nos. 15-285 & 20-3 (Dec. 16, 2022) (“Waiver Request”); *Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force Final Report and Recommendation*, WT Docket No. 15-285 (Dec. 16, 2022) (“HAC Report”).

² *Amendment of the Commission’s Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, Order, DA 23-327 (WTB rel. Apr. 14, 2023). The HAC Task Force requests that the waiver be granted several weeks in advance of the compliance deadline to allow for the interim volume control and other equipment authorization testing.

³ See, e.g., HAC Report at 1-2; Comments of Samsung Electronics America, WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3 (filed Apr. 24, 2023); Comments of the Mobile & Wireless Forum, WT Docket Nos. 20-3 (filed May 3, 2023); Reply Comments of the Telecommunications Industry Association, WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3 (filed May 12, 2023); Reply Comments of the Consumer Technology Association (filed May 18, 2023); Reply Comments of the Competitive Carriers Association WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3 (filed May 18, 2023).

Force recently proposed additional interim testing.⁴ The ATIS HAC Task Force requests that the waiver remain in effect until the Commission updates its rules to reflect the updated volume control standard.⁵

The HAC Task Force also discussed the HAC Report's longer-term recommendations, in particular those related to a commitment to volume control testing, the incorporation of Bluetooth as a new means of wirelessly coupling hearing devices with wireless phones,⁶ and transition timelines. The consensus HAC Report set forth both short-term and medium-term recommendations so that the Commission and stakeholders could confidently pursue a path towards 100% HAC. Nonetheless, the HAC Task Force is willing to discuss and consider changes to these recommendations. Discussion of the HAC Task Force's longer-term recommendations should not delay the short-term relief requested in the Waiver Request, which appropriately focuses on an interim volume control testing methodology.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules, a copy of this letter is being electronically submitted into the record of this proceeding.

Sincerely,



Thomas Goode
General Counsel

cc: Jonathan Campbell

⁴ Letter from Thomas Goode, ATIS, to Marlene H. Dortch, FCC, WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3 (filed Sept. 12, 2023).

⁵ Waiver Request at 14.

⁶ By "wireless coupling," the HAC Task Force means a coupling method that is either via telecoil/magnetic field or Bluetooth.

Attachment: FCC Meeting Attendees

Office of Chairwoman Rosenworcel

Jonathan Campbell

HAC Task Force Representatives

Lise Hamlin, HAC Task Force Executive Committee, Hearing Loss Association of America

Shellie Blakeney, HAC Task Force Executive Committee, T-Mobile

Rob Kubik, HAC Task Force Executive Committee, Samsung

Ali Mays, Competitive Carriers Association

Megan Stull, Apple

Christiaan Segura, CTIA

Jonathan Mark, Google

Helen Zhao, Google

Annie Brown, ATIS

Tom Goode, ATIS

Jackie Wohlgemuth, ATIS

Rachel Wolkowitz, Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP, and counsel to CTIA