



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

September 20, 2007

TOM LATHAM
Congressman
4th District, Iowa

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W., Room 8-B201
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to express my concern regarding a proposal that is pending before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in OET Docket No. 04-186 02-380. This proposal seeks to allow personal and portable unlicensed transmitting devices in the television white spaces after the digital television transition in February of 2009.

It has been brought to my attention that allowing unlicensed transmitting devices to operate on the "vacant" channels in the television band may cause interference to the channels being viewed by consumers. Moreover, the FCC's initial evaluation of the performance of prototype television band white space devices, OET Report No. 07-TR-1006, found that the devices did not regularly detect television broadcast or wireless microphone signals, making digital television unwatchable.

It is imperative that the FCC and Congress work together to ensure the digital television transition is as smooth as possible; interference free over-the-air television is crucial to this transition. As you know, consumers are expected to spend billions of dollars buying new digital television sets. Moreover, Congress has allocated \$1.5 billion dollars for digital-to-analog converter boxes for those who are unable to afford new equipment. Allowing unlicensed devices to operate in the band could jeopardize the use of this equipment.

It is my understanding that the source of the interference is also impossible to locate and terminate. Therefore, consumers will be unable to identify the source of the interference and users of unlicensed devices will not realize that they are causing interference to their neighbors. Eventually, with a potential for millions of devices to be in use in the market, the identification of interfering devices will be difficult.

As we go forward, I encourage you to refrain from permitting the use of personal and portable unlicensed transmitting devices until it is proven

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that such technology will not interfere with existing channels or wireless microphone signals. I strongly encourage you to focus on this matter, and look forward to a response. Should you have any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Latham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Latham
Member of Congress

TL/AE