



House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

SAT Streamlining Act: Modernizing Satellite Licensing for the Final Frontier

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**Testimony of Kara Leibin Azocar, Vice President, Regulatory & Public Policy
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Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today about the vibrant space marketplace and the SAT Streamlining Act (“SAT Act”). My name is Kara Lebin Azocar and I am the Vice President of Regulatory and Public Policy for Iridium Communications Inc. (“Iridium”).

Iridium is a Leading U.S.-Based Satellite Service Provider.

For decades, Iridium has been a leading American-founded and American-based mobile-satellite service (“MSS”) communications provider, now serving roughly 2.5 million subscribers including the U.S. government and individuals and private entities around the world. Iridium’s U.S.-licensed second-generation constellation of 66 non-geostationary orbit satellites provides service in the L-band, includes Ka-band feeder links and satellite-to-satellite cross links, and offers global, pole-to-pole coverage, connecting people, organizations, and assets to and from anywhere, in real time.

Iridium’s ubiquitous network provides reliable, weather-resilient communications services to areas where terrestrial wireless or wireline networks do not exist or are limited, such as remote land areas, open ocean, airways, the polar regions, and areas where terrestrial-based services have been damaged due to natural disasters. The Iridium constellation is designed to cover the entire Earth without coverage gaps, efficiently routing traffic through its network of satellites and related ground infrastructure. Iridium offers all these capabilities while making extremely efficient use of *less than 9 megahertz* of L-band user link spectrum.

Iridium is a leading provider of satellite communications to the U.S. government, principally serving the Department of War and supplying mobile satellite products and services to agencies and offices across the federal government for a wide variety of applications. The U.S. government, directly and indirectly, is Iridium’s single largest customer.

Iridium continues to expand by developing new and innovative uses for our network. For example:

- **Iridium NTN Direct.** Iridium NTN Direct, our new standards-based, narrowband Internet of Things (“IoT”) and direct-to-device service is scheduled to debut later this year and will extend the reach of cellular carriers to the entire planet, unlike any other network. To accomplish this feat, Iridium did not launch any new satellites – instead, we reprogrammed our already deployed network to enable this new service. Iridium worked closely with international partners at 3rd Generation Partnership Project (“3GPP”) for over two years and, at the end of 2025, Iridium’s technical specifications were formally locked into the final approved version of the 3GPP rel. 19 Narrowband IoT standards.



This feat was accomplished in record time and shows Iridium’s innovative-drive and leadership as an American company on the global stage. Later this year, off-the-shelf cellular devices will connect to the Iridium’s LEO constellation, providing a standardized direct-to-device solution offering SMS and IoT functionality.

- **Iridium PNT.** Iridium today offers the first truly global low-Earth orbit positioning, navigation, and timing (“PNT”) solution, providing resilience with exceptional reliability, high security, and signal strength greater than GPS can provide today. Not resting on this service, however, a commercial launch of Iridium’s revolutionary application-specific integrated circuit (“ASIC”) chip is imminent and will support resilient primary or backup PNT capabilities in an ultra-compact chip that can be easily embedded in GPS-dependent devices. The Iridium PNT signal is 1,000-times stronger than GPS, enabling it to penetrate buildings, overcome line-of-sight issues in urban canyons where high-rise buildings effectively block GPS signals. Most importantly, Iridium PNT is today providing an essential service that is protecting critical infrastructure globally – like 5G networks; transportation systems on land, at sea, and in the air; and financial institutions – against GPS jamming, spoofing, and timing disruptions.

Satellite Priorities Balance New Entry and Ongoing Provision of Critical Services.

As a global leader in the space industry, Iridium welcomes the increasingly competitive space marketplace. To ensure that the satellite industry continues its rapid development of new and more robust offerings, it is essential that laws and regulations facilitate the evolutionary and revolutionary growth of the space industry, not inhibit it. As a longtime U.S. licensed and U.S. based satellite innovator, we particularly understand and appreciate the role of U.S. global leadership in Space Race 2.0.

Space is a bipartisan issue. The previous administration created the Federal Communications Commission’s (“FCC’s”) Space Bureau and initiated satellite streamlining initiatives. Now the torch has been passed, and under the leadership of Chairman Carr, the Space Bureau has moved rapidly to reduce backlog and develop a comprehensive Space Modernization proposal that looks to implement assembly line processing of space station and earth station applications. Iridium supports these initiatives. Prioritizing reforms through legislation will further ensure that future FCC administrations remain focused on rapid, carefully crafted decisions that will drive U.S. leadership in the rapidly evolving global space economy.

Consistent with these views, there are several core priorities that this Subcommittee and the FCC should emphasize to fuel competition and advancement in the U.S. space economy:

1. First, ensure that critical MSS services, including safety-of-life, aviation, maritime, and other services provided by companies like Iridium, and the feeder links that underlie



them, are protected from harmful interference through clear technical protections, coordination obligations, and enforceable compliance mechanisms that preserve high levels of service reliability and continuity.

2. Second, free up additional MSS spectrum where feasible and drive more efficient use of existing MSS allocations through technology-neutral rules, modernization of service and technical requirements, and streamlined licensing to foster competition, enhance capacity, and improve end-user outcomes.
3. Third, promote future access to satellite spectrum via transparent, predictable, rules-based processes, that provide adequate notice and opportunity for public comment, recognize the technical requirements of different types of systems, and allow the FCC sufficient time to rapidly but fully evaluate the merits of applications while still providing process certainty and reliability for all operators.
4. And finally, encourage innovation in alternative PNT solutions across all use cases by supporting market-based mechanisms that prioritize resilience, redundancy, and rapid adoption of new technologies, especially where such use cases implicate national security and public safety objectives.

The SAT Streamlining Act Can Enhance Services Provided in the United States.

With these priorities in mind, Iridium supports Congress's efforts to modernize space and earth station licensing to unlock additional American ingenuity and capabilities. Essential to this effort is the need to ensure that any change in FCC rules adequately protects operators, like Iridium, that are already providing valuable services to the American public and federal stakeholders and promotes regulatory certainty for licensees and applicants alike.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.