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Congress of the United States
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PROTECTION SUBCOMMITTEE

September 19, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to express concern about a pending proposal to place unlicensed, personal and portable devices on television channels.

Mr. Chairman, I want you to know that although I fully embrace the impending innovation of the "White Space devices (WSD)", I am concerned that the use of these devices now or in the future poses an unacceptable risk of harmful interference that would permanently undermine over-the-air television in the United States.

As the Congressional Representative of a rural and improvised district, I am very much aware of the divide that results from a lack of access to broadband. I feel that through stronger research and development, this nation is on the brink of closing the digital divide and providing access to every citizen at a high speed and low cost.

I was troubled after learning of an analysis of the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) own data which revealed that digital television sets could receive interference from unlicensed devices in 80 to 87% of a television station's coverage area. Moreover, the FCC's most recent report, released July 31, 2007, found that a prototype device that supposedly avoided interference by "sensing" the presence of TV signals simply did not work and can cause interference. As you know, even a limited amount of interference freezes a digital picture, diminishing its integrity.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to re-emphasize my full support of any efforts to deliver the promise of broadband to rural America. However, I believe there are ways to utilize "unused" spectrum through fixed systems that can offer the advantages of broadband to rural consumers without threatening viewers who rely on over-the-air television.

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The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
September 19, 2007
Page 2

As we move forward with this digital television transition, I would like to urge the Commission to cautiously find non-evasive, innovative ways to modernize communication for rural America.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. K. Butterfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress