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Mr. Larry Shaw
Director General
Telecommunications Policy Branch
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
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Emailed to: wireless@ic.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Shaw:

Subject: **TELUS Comments in Response to Proposals and Changes to the Spectrum in Certain Bands Below 1.7 GHz, *Canada Gazette* – Part 1, Notice No. DGTP-004-05, Dated November 29, 2005**

TELUS Communications Company (TELUS) is pleased to have the opportunity to submit these comments to the Industry Canada (the Department) in response to the above captioned Gazette Notice (the Gazette Notice).

TELUS has used and continues to use SRS systems in the 1427-1452 MHz and 1492-1517 MHz range to provide service to clients living in rural or remote areas. TELUS is concerned by actions that effectively "whittle away" at the ability to use this band for SRS systems. Continuation of the Department's policies in this regards could jeopardize the ongoing provision of economic and required service to residents living in these rural or remote areas. TELUS has also participated within the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA) in the preparation of their comments on the 1670-1675 MHz band and supports that submission. Our specific comments follow.

Licensed versus unlicensed applications

In the Gazette Notice, in Section 8.1.2 (i) the Department proposed that "medical telemetry applications be permitted, on a licence-exempt and no-protection, no-interference basis, in the frequency bands 1395-1400 MHz and 1427-1429.5 MHz."

TELUS has no objections to such a proposal but suggests that the Department ensure that the overarching policy with respect to the secondary nature of licence exempt applications be maintained. In this regard it sounds as if the Department has inverted this policy when in Section 8.1 of the Gazette Notice, on the bottom of page 20 of that document, in the section dealing with

the band 1427-1432 MHz it states “The band 1427-1432 MHz has been supporting SRS systems for a number of years and there may be some systems operating within certain urban centres **or vicinities”** (emphasis added). “**Care would be required to ensure that there are no point-to-multipoint SRS systems operating in channel S1 (the band 1427 – 1430.5 MHz) that could cause interference to medical telemetry operation” (emphasis added).** It would appear that the Department has things the wrong way around when a licensed application and a licence exempt application interfere. Current SRS systems operating in or in the vicinity of an urban area should continue to enjoy protection and be allowed to remain where they are and any new policy should not unnecessarily restrain the placement of new SRS systems in the future. To repeat it is the unlicensed applications that are operating on a no-protection, no interference basis not the SRS systems.

From 7 channels to 3 channels

In the Gazette Notice, in Section 8.2 the Department announced that it would “provisionally:

(i) place a moratorium on the authorization, of SRS operations in the band 1427-1430.5 MHz (Channel 1) and on the authorization of utility telemetry operations in the band 1427-1429.5 MHz , until the relationship between these systems and medical telemetry systems has been decided in the final spectrum utilization policy

(ii) designate the band 1429.5-1430.5 MHz to N-MCS for AMR applications.”

The Department then stated “that thirty days after the release of this document provisions to designate this spectrum for N-MCS AMR applications will be implemented, unless the Department receives compelling arguments to the contrary.” The Department appeared to justify this assignment by noting that even though the band 1430-1430.5 MHz band was not originally designated to N-MCS for AMR applications, it is still within the bandwidth of SRS channel S1 and therefore the increased impact on coordination, including adjacent channel concerns with S2, were deemed to be minimal. Then in Section 8.2.1 (iii) the Department proposes “in the band 1430.5 – 1432 MHz, priority be given to N-MCS for AMR applications in urban areas and their vicinities, while outside of urban areas priority would be given to SRS systems.”

TELUS reminds the Department that it has a number of systems already installed that have their hub in areas that may be designated as either urban or their vicinities. In order for TELUS to continue to economically serve the clients in rural and remote areas these systems should continue to receive protection. Further many of the switching centres serving rural or remote areas of British Columbia are located in areas that may be designated as either urban or their vicinities. While we understand the intent of the new policy it should not be used to preclude new SRS systems serving rural or remote locations that home on such wire centres.

Taken together the medical telemetry and N-MCS suggestions of the Department would mean the loss by SRS systems of channel S1 and S1’ in or near any urban area or its vicinity. But the Department goes further in sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 that would see SRS channels S1, S2, S3, S1’, S2’ and S3’ effectively lost due to designating the 1432-1435 MHz band for new wireless

applications and the band 1492-1504 MHz band to support utility telemetry applications as well as provision for potential terrestrial subscription radio systems. In other words what is left of a 7 channel SRS band is effectively 4 channels. Then in SRSP-301.4, sections 4.1.3.1 and 4.1.3.2 that channels S7/S7' should only be assigned when none of the channels S1/S1' to S6/S6' are available. Further the Department notes that channel S7' may be subject to sharing with the MSS which effectively reduces this band to 3 SRS channels in many locations. The net effect of these developments is to reduce what was a 7 channel SRS band to a 3 channel band. This drastic reduction in channel availability can adversely affect the implementation of new SRS systems or the extension of existing systems. This results in a self fulfilling prophecy by the Department that there are no new SRS systems being deployed in the band. If channels were more readily available, operators such as TELUS would have greater freedom and greater certainty of channel availability and would either deploy more SRS systems or extend those already in place.

Conclusion

The 1500 MHz SRS band has been a work horse in the deployment of rural telephone service to Canadians living in rural or remote areas. Equipment for this band continues to be available and continues to improve to make this band an economical and efficient choice to provide much needed service to rural Canadians. Any new policy affecting the SRS band should provide strong protection for existing systems, allow additional repeaters without triggering a wholesale revamping of existing systems and be as flexible as possible to allow continued use of the band for SRS service. TELUS is not opposing the new suggestions within this band but strongly suggests that priority be maintained in this band for provision of communications services for rural Canadians.

Sincerely,

Filed electronically

Ed Prior