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LEADING WIRELESS MICROPHONE USERS SAY GOOGLE'S PLAN IS NOTHING BUT VAPORWARE

Microphone Interests Coalition Responds to White Spaces "Compromise Solution"

NEW YORK, NY, April 7, 2008 — A broad coalition of high-profile wireless microphone users, organized as the Microphone Interests Coalition (MIC), today sharply criticized the recent proposal submitted by Google to open the so-called "white spaces" to unlicensed device use.

Google is touting the proposal as a spectrum compromise that eliminates any remaining interference concerns about using personal/portable devices in the unassigned TV channels called white spaces. The Microphone Interests Coalition, however, says the plan is far from a compromise and certainly should not be viewed as a solution for wireless microphones.

The proposal, similar to one submitted earlier by Motorola, would require wireless microphone users to purchase and operate a so-called "beacon" transmitter -- akin to a jamming device -- and would rely on white space devices to "sense" this beacon in order to prevent the white space device from interfering with microphone transmissions. Google's proposal also identifies a "safe harbor" of three TV channels in which wireless microphones could operate without interference from new devices. Additional protections would be provided by intelligent "spectrum sensing" technology embedded in the portable devices. This sensing technology is currently under evaluation in FCC laboratory testing.

"Despite their claims, the Google proposal does virtually nothing to protect wireless microphones. In short, their 'enhanced spectrum protection plan' doesn't work," said Ed Greene, Emmy Award-winning Audio Director who works on countless productions including The Academy Awards, American Idol, The Tony Awards and the Super Bowl Halftime Show. "Because of the potentially devastating effect on thousands of wireless microphones in daily use, the FCC should not consider adopting their proposal."

"To serious audio professionals, the hype surrounding this proposal does not disguise the fact that it is nothing more than several flawed ideas thrown together under a new label," said James Stoffo, Wireless Coordinator for events such as the Super Bowl, Latin Grammys, and NBA All-Star Game. "Google apparently hopes that the FCC can be steamrolled into rubber-stamping their agenda."

"Google seems to suggest that microphone users should be grateful for such a generous offer. But, make no mistake...the proposal for a beacon and safe harbor channels is pretty much like offering a starving man a few crumbs and a drawing of a sandwich. If that's their idea of enhanced protection, I'd hate to see the un-enhanced version," added T. Richard Fitzgerald of Sound Associates, a primary wireless supplier to Broadway theaters in New York.

"There are several reasons why the beacon concept compounds the 'white spaces' challenges already before the Commission and, in engineering terms, offers no practical solution at all," said Scott Harmala, CTO of ATK Audiotek, a firm that supplies wireless audio equipment for many of the nation's major TV award shows. He outlined some of the concerns of the Microphone Interests Coalition members:

"First, the proposed beacon has not been developed, operated, or tested in any fashion or in any forum. How can the FCC possibly approve an interference protection technology without anyone having seen it work? The Commission's commitment to testing before ruling is well known, and should be followed here. This includes field analysis in actual operating environments," said Harmala.

"Second, the beacon concept relies on spectrum sensing -- the very technology that is performing so poorly in the FCC's ongoing test. Beacons could be just as difficult to detect as the wireless microphones themselves and could create additional interference problems. Without thorough testing, there is no way to know."

Bill Evans, Editor of Front Of House magazine, adds, "Assuming a beacon were to be developed, the fine print reveals that very few wireless microphone users would be allowed to own and operate one. Documents filed by Google, Motorola and others make it clear that they believe that the great majority of wireless microphone users -- who have developed a sophisticated, tried and true frequency coordination system that has enabled operation in this spectrum without issue for decades -- do not deserve any protection priority. Any proposal that leaves touring concert and show productions, hotels and convention centers, Broadway and theaters across the country, houses of worship, civic auditoriums, educational institutions, and large entertainment venues out in the cold cannot be described as serving the public interest."

MIC members also believe the proposal to establish a "safe harbor" for wireless microphones on TV channels 36, 37, and 38 is also flawed. "Channel 37 is reserved for medical telemetry and radio astronomy use, and the Commission has repeatedly acted to preserve it for that purpose," said Ed Wieczorek, wireless audio consultant for various television programs produced in Manhattan. "Channels 36 and 38 are occupied by DTV stations in many markets such as New York and Los Angeles, and even in those areas where they are not, two channels of spectrum are woefully inadequate for the wireless audio needs of a large production."

"In the end, one of the biggest disappointments we have with the proposal is that it attempts once again to distract the FCC from their mission of conducting thorough research that leads to well-informed rulemaking," said Steve Gibson, Music Director and Producer of Broadcast Audio for the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee. "Throughout the white spaces proceeding, the promise of increased broadband access for rural America has continually been compromised by special interests that want to flood populated areas with unproven portable devices. Now that these interests have realized that there is no rabbit in their hat, they once again are trying to divert our attention. The Google proposition does not rise to the level of a reasonable and workable solution."

About the Microphone Interests Coalition (MIC)

The MIC Coalition was formed in July 2007 and its membership includes the American Federation of Musicians, the Grand Ole Opry, the Broadway League, the Recording Academy and more than a dozen other corporations and individuals involved in the audio engineering of major television, theatrical, and music productions.

About PAMA

PAMA (Pro Audio Manufacturing Alliance) is a worldwide trade alliance of leading pro audio manufacturers whose technologies are used in the production of content for broadcast, cinema, live sound, music recording, sports and commercial applications.