Before the

Federal Communications Commission

Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Modernizing Spectrum Sharing for Satellite Broadband	)	SB Docket No. 25-157
	)	
	)	
Revision of the Commission's Rules to Establish More Efficient Spectrum Sharing between NGSO and GSO Satellite Systems	)	RM-11990
	)	(Terminated)
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FCC Should Modernize Rules for Broadband Spectrum Sharing to Keep the U.S. Ahead of China

By Rebecca Grant
July 21, 2025

This comment is in favor of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s proposed rule on modernizing spectrum sharing for satellite broadband (DA/FCC# FCC-25-23). The U.S. must prioritize space dominance and the work of innovative U.S. companies to extend global broadband from low-earth orbit. The FCC should review outdated Equivalent Power Flux Density (EPFD) regulations and establish an environment that enables American Non-Geostationary Orbit (NGSO) providers to thrive.

In the technology race with China, maintaining the current U.S. lead can stimulate space innovation and amplify U.S. competitiveness. The United States has an opportunity to extend broadband services from space by enabling more NGSO constellations. Action now by the FCC can help deter China from creating a viable space-based "Belt and Road" broadband service that could ultimately be used to coerce other nations and compete with the U.S. both in space and in the global information marketplace.

To achieve this, the FCC has proposed a technical evaluation to determine whether rules on EPFD for non-geostationary satellite constellations can be updated while still preserving the principle of noninterference. The current EPFD rule was written in 1997 and took effect in 2000.

Since then, satellite technology has rapidly advanced. Smaller, steerable beams on satellites and options for the geometry and design of new NGSO constellations create a reasonable case for re-evaluating the 1997 formula. Improved spectral efficiency should be evaluated as the basis for a modernized EPFD rule.

Perhaps most important, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) rules for EPFD were written before China was unmasked for its aggressive efforts to dominate global market sectors.

A scenario in which China provides worldwide satellite connectivity as part of its Belt and Road campaign presents a threat to commerce and freedom of expression. The commercial ambitions of the Chinese space industry have been severely underreported, according to Jonathan McDowell of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. China has entered the market with two networks and approximately 100 satellites in orbit. While China's efforts are currently experiencing technical stumbles, this is a familiar playbook, and China must be taken seriously as a medium-term competitor for NGSO broadband services.

Fortunately, American companies are the leading innovators in NGSO constellations. American non-geostationary constellations are well-positioned to provide low latency and reliability, both of which are key to extensive user adoption. In fact, this is one of the few remaining areas of global competition where the U.S. still holds a commanding lead over China. The U.S. can establish a clear market lead in broadband access, but will have to address the modernization of EPFD standards to do so. The need for efficient spectrum sharing is not going away.

The ITU is unlikely to take the initiative. The ITU is a venerable institution that is now part of the United Nations. In an era of rapidly unfolding technology advances, the ITU process is cumbersome, preoccupied with global stakeholders, and not incentivized to encourage innovation.

Since American technology is at the forefront, it is important for the FCC to determine what changes can be made to the EPFD rules while preserving the principle of non-interference.

The FCC has ensured plenty of precautions are in place as NGSOs increase their satellite constellations. For example, providers like Starlink and Kuiper are already subject to stringent rules that correctly place most of the business risk with them. NGSO satellite operators must not cause harmful interference and must accept any interference they may receive. In the event of any harmful interference, they may be ordered to cease their operations immediately.

Therefore, it is in the interest of the American public for the FCC to consider independent action on technical spectrum considerations. Of course, the FCC should also routinely ensure that spectrum decisions are complementary with U.S. national security requirements for space operations.