



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20590

December 31, 2021

John T. Stankey
Chief Executive Officer
AT&T

Hans Vestberg
Chief Executive Officer
Verizon

Dear Mssrs. Stankey and Vestberg:

Thank you for the ongoing dialogue and for your prior agreement to an initial 30-day delay as we work to find a solution that will provide confidence that 5G C-Band and aviation will safely coexist in the United States. We recognize the significant investment your companies made to launch 5G C-band service, and the importance of expanding 5G service for the American economy. At the same time, absent further action, the economic stakes for the aviation industry and the disruptions the traveling public would face from commercial launch of C-Band service on January 5 are significant, particularly with the ongoing stress and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Accordingly, we seek to build on our productive discussions by offering the attached proposal as a near-term solution for advancing the co-existence of 5G deployment in the C-Band and safe flight operations.

Failure to reach a solution by January 5 will force the U.S. aviation sector to take steps to protect the safety of the traveling public, particularly during periods of low visibility or inclement weather. These steps will result in widespread and unacceptable disruption as airplanes divert to other cities or flights are canceled, causing ripple effects throughout the U.S. air transportation system.

This proposal minimizes and spreads the short-term economic and operational burden while permanent fixes are rapidly put into place. It will still involve significant disruptions for aviation operations in the U.S., but represents a much better way forward than the current trajectory.

Under this framework, commercial C-band service would begin as planned in January with certain exceptions around priority airports. The FAA and the aviation industry will identify priority airports where a buffer zone would permit aviation operations to continue safely while the FAA completes its assessments of the interference potential around those airports. Our goal would then be to identify mitigations for all priority airports that will enable the majority of large commercial aircraft to operate safely in all conditions. This will allow for 5G C-band to deploy around these priority airports on a rolling basis, such that C-Band planned locations will be

activated by the end of March 2022, barring unforeseen technical challenges or new safety concerns. Meanwhile, the FAA will safely expedite the approvals of Alternate Means of Compliance (AMOCs) for operators with high-performing radio altimeters to operate at those airports.

We appreciate that this proposal offers a general framework and that further discussion will be needed to clarify important details. We commit to basing those discussions on the substantial technical information that has been shared and will be shared as part of this process, to ensure that decisions and outcomes are fact-based and data driven.

As part of this proposal, we ask that your companies continue to pause introducing commercial C-Band service for an additional short period of no more than two weeks beyond the currently scheduled deployment date of January 5. During this time, the FAA will identify the priority airports, issue the required Notices to Air Missions (NOTAMs) and begin approving AMOCs. During this time, the FAA will review information relating to the size of the buffer zone around critical airports and will seek to reduce the size when safely able based on data from aviation manufacturers. The FAA will make every effort to complete this work as expeditiously as possible.

From the beginning of our discussions, our overarching goal has been to protect flight safety, while ensuring that 5G deployment and aviation operations can co-exist. We believe this proposal advances this goal and avoids substantial disruptions to aviation operations – and to the flying public – in the short term.

The United States has the safest aviation system in the world. We achieve this every day by actively identifying risks and eliminating them. Passengers have confidence that when they board one of the daily 45,000 commercial flights they will safely reach their destination.

We are an aviation nation because flying is safe. Our safe aviation systems and thriving aviation industry are profoundly important to America's economy and our way of life. We know you share the desire to keep aviation safe and efficient, and we urge you to seriously consider this solution as a common-sense way forward.

Sincerely,



Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation



Steve Dickson
FAA Administrator