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August 27, 2018

Via Email

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Ex Parte* – ACTA Report on HAC Compliant Advanced Communications Services (ACS)
Telephonic Customer Premise Equipment (CPE)
CG Docket No. 13-46, WT Docket Nos. 07-250 and 10-254

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Administrative Council for Terminal Attachments (ACTA) is pleased to submit a report on the work of the ACTA to accommodate the registration of Hearing Aid Compliant (HAC) Advanced Communications Services (ACS) telephonic Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) in the ACTA database.

This report was requested of the ACTA in the October 26, 2017, *Report and Order* in the above-referenced proceedings. The attached report addresses: (1) the modifications necessary to accommodate HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE in the ACTA database; (2) the pertinent information that ACTA will request from responsible parties for ACS telephonic CPE; and (3) procedures for submitting or accessing information on HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE that will differ from the existing procedures for currently registered terminal equipment.

A copy of this report is being filed in the above-referenced docket.

If there are any questions, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Goode", written in a cursive style.

Thomas Goode
ATIS General Counsel, on behalf of the Administrative Council for Terminal Attachments

cc: Robert Aldrich, Legal Advisor; Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Susan Bahr, Attorney Advisor, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Jim Szeliga, Customer Service Chief, Office of Engineering and Technology
John Vu, Electronics Engineer, Industry Analysis and Technology Division, Wireline Competition Bureau
Cathy Zima, Deputy Division Chief, Industry Analysis and Technology Division, Wireline Competition Bureau

Administrative Council for Terminal Attachment Report

CG Docket No. 13-46, WT Docket Nos. 07-250, 10-254

This report provides an update on the efforts of the Administrative Council for Terminal Attachments (ACTA) to accommodate the Federal Communications Commission's (Commission) decision to apply the wireline HAC standards to handsets used with advanced communications services (ACS), including Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services and to require the registration of such equipment in the ACTA terminal equipment database.

About the ACTA.

In 2000, the Commission minimized the government's role in Part 68 by privatizing significant portions of its rules governing the connection of customer premises equipment (telephone equipment) to the public switched telephone network and certain private-line services, and privatized the standards development and terminal equipment approval processes.¹ To ensure continued uniformity and a level playing field, the Commission mandated the establishment of the Administrative Council for Terminal Attachments (ACTA), co-sponsored by the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) and Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA).

The ACTA is an open organization established to: (1) adopt technical criteria and to act as the clearing-house, publishing technical criteria for terminal equipment developed by ANSI-accredited standards development organizations; and (2) establish and maintain a registration database of equipment approved as compliant with the technical criteria.² Terminal equipment connected to the public network or certain private-line services requiring such approval, must comply and continue to comply with the applicable Part 68 rules and regulations and with the applicable ACTA-adopted technical criteria, labeling requirements, and customer information requirements. Entities submitting information to the database must submit pertinent information regarding the identity of the Responsible Party and approved equipment to the ACTA database administrator and must assure that the ACTA-specified product information is available for retrieval from the database, via the publicly-available interface, prior to the connection of such product to the public switched telephone network (PSTN) or certain private-line services that require such approval

As mandated by the Commission, the ACTA must perform its responsibilities in an equitable and nondiscriminatory manner. Membership in the ACTA is open to any organization, company or group having an interest in the business of the ACTA. The ACTA is comprised of four Interest Segments: (1) Service Providers – two voting members; (2) Manufacturers – two voting members; (3) Testing Laboratories – two voting members; and (4) Other Interested Parties

¹ Pursuant to the Report and Order, CC Docket No. 99-216, FCC 00-400. See 47 CFR § 68.610(a); 2000 Biennial Regulatory Review of Part 68 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations, Report and Order, 15 FCC Rcd 24944, 24983, para. 108 (2000)

² For more information about the ACTA, please see the ACTA website at www.part68.org.

Segment (e.g., consumer groups and associations representing individuals with disabilities) – two voting members). The ACTA also invites non-voting observers to participate, including representatives from the Commission, Industry Canada, and the Comisión Federal de Telecomunicaciones. There is no fee to participate in the ACTA.

The ACTA maintains an accurate database of almost 50,000 telephone terminal equipment submissions that is readily available and accessible to the public including persons with disabilities. The database permits interested parties such as the Commission, U.S. Customs, and providers of telecommunications services to track and identify suppliers or importers of non-compliant equipment. It also ameliorates concerns regarding the potentially adverse impact of non-compliant terminal equipment on the public network by ensuring that suppliers are held accountable for any damage their equipment may cause and provides the public with the means to identify the party ultimately responsible for a registered equipment.

The database is administered by the ACTA based on procedures that were developed and approved by the industry. These procedures, which include the ACTA Operating Principles and Procedures and the ACTA Submission Guidelines and Procedures, are available from the ACTA website at www.part68.org.

ACTA Work to Accommodate HAC-Compliant ACS telephonic CPE in the ACTA Database

In its October 26, 2017, *Report and Order*, the Commission applied the same testing, attestations of compliance, registration, labeling, and complaint handling requirements that currently apply to CPE directly connected to the PTSN to ACS telephonic CPE, for purposes of HAC compliance.³ Under this order, “responsible parties” for ACS telephonic CPE are required to have the equipment tested for HAC compliance, register such equipment in the ACTA terminal equipment database, and provide appropriate labels and other information to consumers regarding HAC compliance.

In the order, the Commission also requested that the ACTA submit a report within 180 days of publication of the *Report and Order* in the Federal Register explaining: (1) the progress of any modifications necessary to accommodate HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE in the database, including any changes to how the ACTA will administer the database; (2) the pertinent information that the ACTA will request from responsible parties for ACS telephonic CPE, especially for the HAC and volume control features; and (3) any procedures for submitting or accessing information on HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE that will differ from the existing procedures for currently registered terminal equipment.

To address this issue, the ACTA established a Working Group (WG) to examine necessary changes to the ACTA processes and database to accommodate HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE. The Working Group has met regularly to examine how to best accommodate the registration of HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE.

³ *Report and Order* and *Order on Reconsideration*, CG Docket No. 13-46, WT Docket Nos. 07-250, 10-254, released October 26, 2017.

1. Progress of Modifications Necessary to Accommodate HAC-Compliant ACS Telephonic CPE in the ACTA Database

As noted above, the ACTA report is to include the progress of any modifications necessary to accommodate HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE in the database, including any changes to how the ACTA will administer the database. The ACTA notes that it has examined the database and determined that no significant modifications are required to accommodate HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE. The ACTA is considering upgrading/updating the database’s user interface, but these changes are not specifically related to the registration of HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE and are not required to accommodate this equipment. The ACTA also does not have any plans to change how it will administer the database, believing that the existing consensus-based, industry-driven approach has worked well.

The ACTA did identify the need to update the underlying technical criteria for terminal equipment. As explained above, the ACTA database includes equipment approved as compliant with these industry-developed technical criteria. The ACTA requested Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), which develops the technical criteria for TTE, to review its requirements. TIA reviewed and updated TIA-168-C-1, Telecommunications – Telephone Terminal Equipment – Labeling Requirements – Addendum 1 to add a definition for “ACS” and to update and broaden the description for labeling equipment codes “IP”, “IS”, and “IT” (for VoIP equipment) to ensure codes would apply to VoIP equipment that provides communication via the public switched telephone network or via ACS. TIA worked diligently to update its standard accordingly and, in June, the ACTA issued a Public Notice seeking public comment on the revised technical criteria. There being no objections, the ACTA announced on July 19 the adoption of these revised criteria.⁴

2. Pertinent information that the ACTA will request from responsible parties for ACS telephonic CPE

The ACTA’s report is also to contain the pertinent information that the ACTA will request from responsible parties for ACS telephonic CPE, especially for the HAC and volume control features. The ACTA notes that it will request the same information as is currently requested for other terminal equipment during the filing process. This includes:

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| • Name, Address, and Contact Information of Organization Granting Approval | • Name, Address, and Contact Information of Responsible Party & U.S. Product Information Contact |
| • Telecommunication Certification Body (TCB) Identification Number | • Equipment Description |
| • Declaration of Conformity Included? | • Country of Origin |
| • Terminal Approval Date | • Responsible Party Code (RPC) |
| • Product Identifier | • Manufacturer’s Code (if available) |

⁴ See ACTA [Public Notice on Adoption of Technical Criteria](#) (PN: 18-02). Additional recommendations for changes are also being discussed in the ACTA to provide further clarity on the definitions of Equipment Codes IP, IS and IT with TR41.9 to make sure they align with the definitions of ACS as outlined in the order.

- Current Authorization Number (only if Modification, Notice, Re-certification, and/or Re-declaration filing)
- Responsible party submitter information (cont'd):
- Equipment Code
- List of Brand or Trade Name(s), Including New and Existing Names
- List of New and Existing Model Number(s) for Each Brand or Trade Name
- Network Address Signaling Code
- AC Ringer Equivalence Number (REN)
- Hearing Aid Compatibility?
- Universal Service Ordering Code (USOC) Jack(s)
- Repetitive Dialing to a Single Number
- Filing Status (original, notice of change, etc.)
- Facility Interface Code(s)
- Manufacturer Port ID
- Service Order Code(s) (SOC)
- Answer Supervision Code(s)
- Ancillary Equipment (if applicable)

3. *Procedures for Submitting or Accessing Information on HAC-Compliant ACS Telephonic CPE that Will Differ from the Procedures for Currently Registered Equipment*

The ACTA's report is also to include any procedures for submitting or accessing information on HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE that will differ from the existing procedures for currently registered terminal equipment. To accommodate the registration of such equipment, the ACTA notes that it has updated both the ACTA Submission Guidelines and Procedures, as well as the ACTA Operating Principles and Procedures. The updates apply the same processes and procedures to the registration of such ACS equipment that applies to other equipment currently registered in the ACTA database. The revisions will be formally approved and effective on August 31, 2018.

The ACTA is also proposing to charge the same fee for registering HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE as for other equipment. These fees are outlined in Section 3.1 of the ACTA Submission Guidelines and Procedures.

Under the ACTA procedures, a manufacturer of HAC-Compliant ACS Telephonic CPE therefore would follow these steps to register and access registered information:

1. Interested Parties would obtain a filer account from the ACTA Online Filing (AOF) system
2. Once approved, new filers have various filing options, depending on their specific needs:
 - Obtain a Responsible Party Code
 - New Original Filings
 - Modification Filings
 - Notice of Change Filings
 - Recertification/Re-Approval filings
 - RPC Data Validation Filings
3. During the filing process, filers may submit any required documents (Supplier's Declaration of Conformity or TCB Certificate)
4. Filers may review their submission prior to submitting payment

5. Upon successful completion, filers receive confirmation of their filings

Conclusion

The ACTA is pleased to note that it is well-prepared to accommodate the inclusion of HAC-compliant ACS telephonic CPE in the ACTA database. All necessary updates to the database, technical criteria, operating procedures, and submission guidelines are scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2018. The ACTA is also preparing outreach and educational efforts to inform the industry of the new registration requirements and the availability of the ACTA database. These efforts include the development of an ACTA Public Notice on this issue as well as changes to the ACTA website (www.part68.org) to reflect the new requirements.

If there are any questions about this report or the work of the ACTA, feel free to contact: Scott Lambert, ACTA Chair (scott.lambert@us.bureauveritas.com), Steve Barclay, ATIS Sr. Director, Global Standards Development (sbarclay@atis.org), Mark Cassarino, ACTA Database Manager (mcassarino@atis.org), or Tom Goode, ATIS General Counsel (tgoode@atis.org).