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Satellites and Telecommuting: A 21st Century Solution

July 18, 2006, Washington, DC – Joslyn Read, assistant vice president for regulatory affairs from satellite service provider Hughes Network Systems (Hughes), testified today on behalf of the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) before the House Government Reform’s Subcommittee hearing on telecommuting solutions for the 21st Century.

Ms. Read’s testimony highlighted the unique role of satellite communications in meeting the broadband communications needs of the federal government for telecommuting and teleworking.

In her testimony for TIA, Ms. Read stated that **“high speed broadband services have been deployed to many areas of the U.S. but estimates of the number of homes without high-speed availability still range from 10-15 million..”**

Ms. Read emphasized the findings of a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report which found that it is more costly to provide broadband services to areas with low population density and rugged terrain. The GAO also noted that because the cost of building land-based broadband infrastructure is so high in some rural areas, satellite broadband technology may be the best option for addressing a lack of broadband in those regions.

“Because satellite technology is insensitive to distance, geography or terrain, satellite broadband is uniquely positioned to solve many of the teleworking and telecommuting needs of today, in particular Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)”, said SIA executive director, David Cavossa, echoing Ms. Read’s remarks regarding the benefits and utility of satellites.

Ms. Read submitted these recommendations to help accelerate federal COOP plans and teleworking:

1. Satellite communications should be included in any formal teleworking or COOP plan implemented by the government.
2. Congress and the individual agencies of the Federal Government should define and fund its teleworking programs to include:
 - a. Compensation to teleworkers for their monthly high-speed broadband services;
 - b. Compensation to teleworkers for the broadband customer premises equipment needed to perform their online duties, particularly for those teleworkers that are involved in essential agency functions, and for those that reside in locations that are rural, remote, and are less able to travel into a centralized workplace; and
 - c. Tax credits for non-federal employers and employees who engage in teleworking programs.

In addition to being an active member of TIA and head of regulatory affairs for Hughes, Ms. Read is also the current Chair of the Satellite Industry Association.

SIA is a U.S.-based trade association providing worldwide representation of the leading satellite operators, service providers, manufacturers, launch services providers, and ground equipment suppliers. SIA is the unified voice of the U.S. satellite industry on policy, regulatory, and legislative issues affecting the satellite business. Additional information can be found at www.sia.org.

SIA Executive Members include: Artel Inc.; The Boeing Company; The DirecTV Group; Globalstar LLC; Hughes Network Systems LLC.; ICO Global Communications; Integral Systems, Inc.; Intelsat, Ltd.; Iridium Satellite LLC; Lockheed Martin Corp.; Loral Space & Communications Ltd.; Mobile Satellite Ventures LP; Northrop Grumman Corporation; PanAmSat Corporation; SES Americom, Inc.; and TerreStar Networks Inc.; and Associate Members; ATK Inc.; EMC Inc.; Eutelsat Inc.; Inmarsat Ltd.; IOT Systems; Marshall Communications Corp.; New Skies Satellites Inc.; Spacecom Corp.; Stratos Global Corp.

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