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For Immediate Release

FCC EXTENDS TRANSITION PERIOD FOR ACCREDITATION OF LABORATORIES THAT PERFORM EQUIPMENT CERTIFICATION TESTING

WASHINGTON, June 15, 2016 – Today, the Federal Communications Commission moved to provide testing laboratories with an additional year to meet an accreditation requirement under its equipment authorization rules. The Commission will also provide guidance on the process for recognition of accreditation bodies. The Commission took these actions through a Memorandum Opinion and Order and Order on Reconsideration in ET Docket 13-44.

Previously, as part of a decision (https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-14-208A1.docx) that modified certain portions of its rules related to the equipment authorization process, the Commission decided that all laboratories that perform equipment certification testing must be accredited by a recognized accreditation body. Accreditation is a rigorous process that includes an onsite evaluation of a laboratory’s facilities, review of the competency of its testing personnel, and examination of the quality systems the lab has in place. The Commission provided a transition period to phase out the alternate practice of accepting test data from “listed” laboratories – labs whose facilities had been found acceptable by the Commission staff based on paper review of technical data. Two parties sought reconsideration of this action.

The Commission agreed with petitioners’ concerns that many laboratories will not be able to make the July 13, 2016 deadline. To avoid the potential disruption of the distribution and sale of radiofrequency equipment in the United States, the Commission is extending the time during which it will recognize “listed” laboratories to July 13, 2017. The extension will also provide additional time for the recognition of accreditation bodies and accreditation of laboratories as well as for countries to pursue telecommunications Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with the United States to provide for the recognition of accredited laboratories in those countries.

Today’s decision can be found here: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-74A1.docx

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).