

**FHH Telecom Law**  
**May 2002**

**Reform of Satellite Licensing Procedures**

*By: Alison J. Shapiro*  
*703-812-0478*  
*shapiro@fhhlaw.com*

Responding to increased global competition, the FCC proposes to reform its satellite licensing process to expedite delivery of satellite services to the public. Many applications involve requests to operate satellite systems in the same frequency bands, which creates the potential for mutual interference. The FCC currently allows applicants to negotiate solutions to accommodate all proposed systems, but the negotiations often delay licensing by months or years.

The FCC has now proposed two alternative space station licensing proposals. One would eliminate processing rounds with a new "first come, first served" approach, under which the FCC would consider the first application for specific spectrum and/or orbit location, and process later-filed applications according to their filing dates. The second proposal would simply modify the existing procedures to require that negotiations be completed within 60 days. The FCC has also proposed other satellite licensing initiatives, including elimination of financial qualifications, strengthening the milestone requirements, eliminating the anti-trafficking rule, and streamlining the replacement satellite application procedure.