

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Achieving 100% Wireless Handset Model	)	WT Docket No. 23-388
Hearing Aid Compatibility	)	
	)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing	)	WT Docket No. 20-3
Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets	)	

ORDER

Adopted: August 26, 2025**Released: August 26, 2025**

By the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We hereby extend the existing waiver of section 20.19(b) of the Commission's rules to permit handset manufacturers to continue to use the temporary volume control standard to certify new handset models as hearing aid compatible.¹ We extend the waiver by two years with a new expiration date of September 29, 2027, unless a new volume control standard becomes effective through Commission action prior to this date. Under this two-year extension, new handset models may continue to be certified as hearing aid-compatible as long as the handset models meet the requirements of the temporary volume control standard as well as all other aspects of the 2019 American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard used to certify handset models as hearing aid compatible.² We also require CTIA, in coordination with the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), to file two progress reports updating us on the status of achieving the milestones set out in the TIA update that CTIA links to in its Petition for Extension of Waiver.³ We take these steps to ensure that new handset models can continue to be certified as hearing aid compatible as well as to encourage the prompt development of a permanent volume control standard that the Commission can incorporate into its rules.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In 2017 the Commission adopted a volume control requirement for certifying new handset models as hearing aid compatible.⁴ While the Commission adopted a volume control

¹ 47 CFR § 20.19(b).

² *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3, Order, 38 FCC Rcd 8636 (WTB Sept. 29, 2023) (adopting a temporary volume control standard) (*HAC Waiver Order*).

³ CTIA Petition for Extension of Waiver, WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3, at 3 & n.8. (filed July 2, 2025) (CTIA Petition), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10702062626450/1>. CTIA's petition includes a link to a TIA status update on the development of a permanent volume control standard. This update includes a link to a more detailed TIA status update.

⁴ *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 07-250, Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, 32 FCC Rcd 9063, 9073–74, para. 23 (2017). The Commission modified its wireless hearing aid compatibility rules by adopting a volume control requirement similar to the requirement for wireline phones and affirmed its belief that a volume control requirement that specifies certain levels of amplification as an element of hearing aid compatibility is just as necessary for wireless handsets as it is for
(continued....)

requirement, the Commission did not adopt a specific volume control standard. Instead, the Commission noted that an industry approved technical standard was nearing completion and, once the Commission adopted this standard into its rules, compliance with this standard would constitute compliance with the Commission's new wireless volume control requirement.⁵

3. In September 2019, the ANSI Committee filed a petition with the Commission asking the Commission to replace the existing 2011 ANSI Standard referenced in the Commission's rules with the new 2019 ANSI Standard.⁶ Like the 2011 ANSI standard, the 2019 ANSI Standard addresses acoustic and inductive coupling between wireless handset models and hearing aids.⁷ The 2019 ANSI Standard, however, also includes the wireless volume control technical standard referenced by the Commission in 2017.⁸ The 2019 ANSI standard specifically incorporates by reference the TIA 5050 Standard that addresses volume control requirements for wireless handset models.⁹ In February 2021, as requested by ANSI and commenters, the Commission adopted the 2019 ANSI Standard for determining hearing aid compatibility.¹⁰ After a two-year transition period, on June 5, 2023, the 2019 ANSI Standard was set to become the exclusive testing standard for determining hearing aid compatibility.¹¹

4. On December 16, 2022, the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) filed a petition for a limited, interim waiver of sections 20.19(b)(1) and (3) of the Commission rules to allow wireless handset models to satisfy a reduced volume control testing methodology—instead of the full ANSI/TIA Volume Control Standard incorporated into the 2019 ANSI Standard—in order to be certified as hearing aid compatible.¹² ATIS argued that the standard that ANSI asked the Commission to adopt was fundamentally flawed because it uses a pulsed-noise signal, which it claimed was insufficiently voice like to be compatible with many modern codecs.¹³

5. On April 14, 2023, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) released an order extending the transition period for exclusive use of the 2019 ANSI Standard from June 5, 2023 to December 5, 2023.¹⁴ WTB took this step to ensure that handset manufacturers could continue to certify

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wireline phones in order to ensure the provision of effective telecommunication services for people with hearing loss. *Id.* at 9073–74, 9079–80, 9083, paras. 23, 32–33, 34, 41.

⁵ *Id.* at 9080, 9083, paras. 34, 41.

⁶ Report and Petition of American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee C63®, CG Docket No. 13-46, WT Docket Nos. 07-250 and 10-254, at 1 (filed Sept. 23, 2019), <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10923530915563/ANSI%20C63%20Petition%20to%20FCC%20-%20190923.pdf>.

⁷ *HAC Waiver Order*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8639, para. 8.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.* The TIA 5050 Standard establishes a volume control testing methodology which defines conversational gain as the acoustic output level of speech from a handset relative to the acoustic level that would be present in a face-to-face conversation with two people one meter apart. *Id.* at 8639, para. 9.

¹⁰ *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3, Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 4566, 4570, para. 9 (2021) (*2021 HAC Order*).

¹¹ *Id.* at 4576, 4577, paras. 22, 26.

¹² Petition of ATIS on Behalf of the Covered Entities of the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force for Limited, Interim Waiver, WT Docket Nos. 15-285 and 20-3 (filed Dec. 16, 2022), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/1216020115086/1>.

¹³ *Id.* at 3–4.

¹⁴ *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3, Order, 38 FCC Rcd 3400, 3406, para. 17 (WTB Apr. 14, 2023).

new handset models with hearing aid compatibility features using the 2011 ANSI standard that did not include volume control requirements while the Commission considered ATIS's waiver petition.¹⁵

6. On September 29, 2023, WTB conditionally granted in part ATIS's request for a limited waiver of the 2019 ANSI Standard's volume control testing requirements.¹⁶ Under the terms of the temporary standard, a handset model may be certified as hearing aid-compatible under the 2019 ANSI Standard if it meets the volume control testing requirements described in the *HAC Waiver Order* as well as all other aspects of the 2019 ANSI Standard.¹⁷ WTB limited use of the temporary standard to a two-year period to allow time for the development of a new, full volume control standard and for its incorporation into the wireless hearing aid compatibility rules.¹⁸ The *HAC Waiver Order* also required ATIS to file a letter with the Commission a year after the temporary volume control standard went into effect updating the Commission on the development of a permanent volume control standard and any issues that had arisen with respect to the development of this standard.¹⁹

7. On September 27, 2024, ATIS submitted the required letter to the Commission.²⁰ ATIS's letter included an attachment prepared by TIA that summarized the status of the development of a new volume control standard. ATIS's letter stated that significant progress had been made by industry in developing a new standard and that TIA expected the approval process for the new standard to happen using only the minimum amount of time required for ANSI approval.²¹

8. On July 2, 2025, CTIA filed a Petition for Extension of Waiver requesting that handset manufacturers be permitted to continue to use the temporary volume control standard to certify handset models as hearing aid-compatible until a new permanent volume control standard becomes effective or at a minimum for at least two years after the expiration of the current waiver.²² CTIA argues that without the extension handset manufacturers will not be able to continue to certify new handset models as hearing aid-compatible because they cannot meet the requirements of the full volume control standard.²³ CTIA states that continued use of the temporary volume control standard will allow consumers to have some volume control functionality while a new standard is developed. CTIA asserts that the extension will be limited in duration because TIA has made significant progress in developing a permanent volume control standard and should complete its work during the first half of 2026.²⁴ CTIA's petition includes a link to a TIA update that supports this completion date.²⁵

¹⁵ *Id.* at 3400, para. 1.

¹⁶ *HAC Waiver Order*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8636, para. 1.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.* at 8637, 8648, 8649, paras. 5, 36, 42.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 8648, para. 37.

²⁰ Letter from Thomas Goode, ATIS General Counsel, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WT Docket No. 20-3 (filed Sept. 27, 2024), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/1092774019517/1>.

²¹ *Id.* at 1.

²² CTIA Petition at 3 & n.9. In October 2024, the Commission reorganized section 20.19(b) of the Commission's rules. *Achieving 100% Wireless Handset Model Hearing Aid Compatibility*, WT Docket No. 23-388, Report and Order, 39 FCC Rcd 11917 (2024) (*100% HAC Order*). As a result, CTIA's petition requests an extension of the section 20.19(b) waiver rather than the section 20.19(b)(1) and (3) waiver. See CTIA Petition at 2 & n.6.

²³ *Id.* at 5–6, 7.

²⁴ *Id.* at 3, 5, 8.

²⁵ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.8; see also TIA Comments and attach. at 2 (TR-41 committee project update on the development of a permanent volume control standard); CTIA Reply at 2 & n.2.

9. On July 8, 2025, WTB released a Public Notice seeking comment on CTIA's petition.²⁶ The Public Notice sought comment on whether the Commission should grant CTIA's petition to extend use of the temporary volume control standard beyond the upcoming September 29, 2025 expiration date and, if so, for how long.²⁷ While commenters agree that we should extend use of the temporary volume control standard,²⁸ there is disagreement about how long we should extend it and under what conditions. Most industry commenters argue that the extension should remain effective until such time as a new volume control standard becomes effective.²⁹ Industry Organizations and Samsung support this position but indicate that at a minimum the extension should be for at least two years after the expiration of the current waiver.³⁰ Accessibility Organizations, however, argue that the extension should be limited to one-year after expiration of the current waiver and that we should require updates that are tied to the quarterly project milestones that are included in the TIA update that CTIA links to in its petition.³¹

10. In an *ex parte* letter filed on August 11, 2025, Accessibility Organizations express concern that the section 20.19(b) waiver only requires handset manufacturers to disclose a handset model's actual conversational gain rather than meet net gain levels that have been demonstrated to meet the needs of those with hearing loss who do not wear hearing aids as well as those with hearing loss who do wear hearing aids.³² Accessibility Organizations state that for this reason the Commission should replace the temporary volume control standard with the new standard as soon as it is approved and published.³³ Consumer Technology Association (CTA) and CTIA filed responses to this letter. With respect to the conversational gain issue that Accessibility Organizations raise, CTA states "that the gain requirement remains an open issue with the standards group, underscoring the need for additional time to develop a consensus, workable standard."³⁴ Similarly, CTIA states that "[t]he Commission should allow time for issues such as gain requirements to be resolved among the multistakeholder technical experts

²⁶ *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment On CTIA's Request To Extend Use Of The Temporary Volume Control Standard Used To Certify Handsets As Hearing Aid Compatible*, WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3, Public Notice, DA 25-585 (WTB July 8, 2025), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10708248486102>. We note that CTIA requests that the Commission grant its extension request sufficiently in advance of the September 29, 2025, expiration date so that the wireless industry can have certainty with respect to the regulatory standard for handsets coming onto the market in the latter half of 2025. CTIA Petition at 3–4. To this end, CTIA requested that Commission use an expedited comment cycle for its petition. *Id.* at 4 & n.10.

²⁷ *Id.* at 2.

²⁸ CTA Comments at 1; Industry Organizations Comments at 1; MWF Comments at 1–2; NCTA Comments at 4; Samsung Comments at 3; Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) Comments at 1; TIA Comments at 2. Industry Organizations is composed of Competitive Carriers Association (CCA), CTIA, Consumer Technology Association (CTA), Mobile & Wireless Forum (MWF), and Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) (collectively, Industry Organizations).

²⁹ CTA Comments at 3; Industry Organizations Comments at 1; MWF Comments at 4; NCTA Comments at 4; TIA Comments at 3.

³⁰ Industry Organizations Comments at 1 & n.2; Samsung Comments at 3 & n.6.

³¹ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 2, 4. Accessibility Organizations is composed of Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Deaf Equality, National Association of the Deaf, TDIforAccess, Inc., and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (collectively, the Accessibility Organizations).

³² Letter from Neil A. Snyder, Director of Public Policy, HLAA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3 (filed Aug. 11, 2025) (Accessibility Organizations Ex Parte Letter).

³³ *Id.* at 2.

³⁴ Letter from Rachel Nemeth, Senior Director, Regulatory Affairs, CTA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3, at 2 & n.5 (filed Aug. 14, 2025) (CTA Ex Parte Letter).

currently participating in the standards development process.”³⁵ Further, CTIA states Accessibility Organizations proposal to replace the temporary volume control standard with the new standard once it is approved and published does not allow test labs time to acquire new testing equipment and software before the new standard becomes the exclusive testing standard.³⁶

III. DISCUSSION

11. Section 1.3 of the Commission’s rules provides that the Commission may “on its own motion or on petition” suspend a rule “for good cause shown, in whole or in part, at any time.”³⁷ The Commission may find that the “good cause shown” standard is met when: (1) “special circumstances warrant a deviation from the general rule” and (2) “such deviation will serve the public interest.”³⁸ In this case, we find good cause to extend the existing waiver of section 20.19(b) for use of the temporary volume control standard until September 29, 2027, unless a new volume control standard becomes effective through Commission action prior to this date.

12. All commenters agree that without an extension, the existing waiver will expire before a new standard can be finalized and adopted. As CTA states, an extension will allow “sufficient time to revise the volume control testing methodology to ensure accurate testing of volume control on handsets . . .”³⁹ Industry Organizations “urge the Commission to extend the present waiver deadline . . .”⁴⁰ The Mobile & Wireless Forum (MWF) states that it “wholly agrees that an extension of the current waiver is both needed to assure the continued availability of compliant devices and warranted given the ongoing work on an updated and effective standard to replace the current problematic version.”⁴¹ NCTA—The Internet & Television Association (NCTA) states that granting the extension “will ensure that . . . individuals with hearing loss continue to receive the highest quality offerings while stakeholders . . . work to implement and codify a new volume testing standard for hearing-aid-compatible . . . devices.”⁴² Samsung “urges the Commission to promptly extend the interim volume control standard . . .”⁴³ TIA states that while its TR-41 Volume Control Task Group (VCTG) has made substantial progress, its work “will not be completed by the existing waiver’s expiration on September 29, 2025.”⁴⁴ Accessibility Organizations “acknowledge that standard-setting processes take time,” and “additional time may be necessary to complete the standards revision process . . .”⁴⁵

13. While commenters support extending the existing section 20.19(b) waiver, there is disagreement on the length of the extension. CTIA “requests that the waiver be extended until the Commission updates its rules to reflect the updated volume control standard,” but “under all circumstances, not less than two years from the expiration of the current waiver.”⁴⁶ Samsung and

³⁵ Letter from Christiaan Segura, Assistant Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, CTIA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3, at 2 & n.6 (filed Aug. 15, 2023) (CTIA Ex Parte Letter).

³⁶ *Id.* at 3.

³⁷ 47 CFR § 1.3.

³⁸ See, e.g., *Ne. Cellular Tel. Co. v. FCC*, 897 F.2d 1164, 1166 (D.C. Cir. 1990); see *WAIT Radio v. FCC*, 418 F.2d 1153, 1157–59 (D.C. Cir. 1969).

³⁹ CTA Comments at 3.

⁴⁰ Industry Organizations Comments at 1; see also CTA Ex Parte Letter at 1.

⁴¹ MWF Comments at 1–2.

⁴² NCTA Comments at 1.

⁴³ Samsung Comments at 3.

⁴⁴ TIA Comments at 2.

⁴⁵ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 2, 3.

⁴⁶ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.8; CTIA Reply at 2 & n.4.

Industry Organizations support CTIA's position but state that they do not view iterative extensions to be the best approach here.⁴⁷ Other commenters either state they support CTIA's petition without commenting on the length of the extension⁴⁸ or argue that the waiver should be opened ended until the Commission's rules are updated and a new standard becomes effective.⁴⁹ These parties argue that a time-limited extension, such as two years, is inefficient and creates regulatory uncertainty. Accessibility Organizations, on the other hand, argue for a one-year extension of the waiver and assert that the new volume control standard should become the new temporary standard once it is balloted and approved while the Commission goes through the rulemaking process to incorporate the new standard into the section 20.19 hearing loss compatibility rules.⁵⁰ Accessibility Organizations support their position by stating that the balloting and approval process signifies consensus among the stakeholders participating in the revision effort and, therefore, that the new standard could be made effective with minimal additional lead time.⁵¹ Accessibility Organizations, however, do not address the procedural process the Commission would use to make the pending volume control standard the new temporary standard after it is balloted and approved.

14. We find that the record provides good cause to extend the existing section 20.19(b) waiver beyond its current expiration date of September 29, 2025. Just as with the initial waiver grant, no parties oppose CTIA's extension request.⁵² Extending the existing waiver will allow handset manufacturers to continue to be able to certify new handset models as hearing aid-compatible and will allow consumers with hearing loss who purchase new hearing aid-compatible handset models to have a measurable level of volume control functionality.⁵³ Further, extending use of the temporary waiver is consistent with the policy objective of the Commission's hearing loss compatibility rules. These rules are based on the principle that consumers with hearing loss should have the same access to the newest and most advanced handset models as consumers without hearing loss.⁵⁴ In addition, extending use of the existing section 20.19(b) waiver will help handset manufacturers and service providers transition to the 100% hearing aid compatibility requirement by allowing them to replace existing non-hearing aid-compatible handset models with new hearing aid-compatible handset models.⁵⁵ As a result, we find that there are special circumstances that warrant extending the existing section 20.19(b) waiver beyond its current September 29, 2025 expiration date and doing so is in the public interest.

15. While we extend the section 20.19(b) waiver beyond its current expiration date, we agree with Accessibility Organizations that the extension should not be open-ended as CTIA and other commenters request.⁵⁶ Although CTIA requests that the waiver be extended until the Commission revises its rules to reflect the updated volume control standard, it also asks that at a minimum the Commission

⁴⁷ Samsung Comments at 3 & n.6, 7; Industry Organizations Comments at 1 & n.2, 3.

⁴⁸ TEDPA Comments at 1.

⁴⁹ CTA Comments at 3; Industry Organizations Comments at 1, 3; MWF Comments at 3–4; NCTA Comments at 4; TIA Comments at 3; NCTA Comments at 4.

⁵⁰ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 3.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 3–4.

⁵² MWF Comments at 2; CTIA Reply at 1.

⁵³ CTA Comments at 3; NCTA Comments at 3–4; Industry Organizations Comments at 3; Samsung Comments at 2.

⁵⁴ *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 07-250, Policy Statement and Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 25 FCC Rcd 11167, 11174, para. 18 (2010); *see also HAC Waiver Order*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8640, para. 11.

⁵⁵ CTIA Petition at 8; Industry Organizations Comments at 2; Samsung Comments at 1; TIA Comments at 1–2; CTIA Reply at 1, 5; *see also 100% HAC Order*, 39 FCC Rcd 11917.

⁵⁶ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 2, 4.

should extend the waiver for “not less than two years from expiration of the current waiver.”⁵⁷ CTIA’s petition is premised on the new standard being balloted and approved by ANSI during the second quarter of 2026.⁵⁸ In support of this premise, CTIA’s petition links to a TIA report which sets out this end date and demonstrates how the VCTG will meet this deadline.⁵⁹ As CTIA states, the VCTG has “made substantial progress and projects to complete its work in the second quarter of 2026.”⁶⁰ CTIA’s petition and reply comments repeatedly assert that the VCTG is “making good progress on a permanent replacement volume testing methodology”⁶¹ and that its request is “time-limited in light of the substantial progress made in developing a revised standard”⁶²

16. Like CTIA, Industry Organizations and Samsung argue that the waiver should be extended until the Commission updates its rules reflecting a new volume control standard but under all circumstances, not less than two years from the expiration of the current waiver.⁶³ Other commenters emphasize that the extension will be of limited duration given the progress that the VCTG had made.⁶⁴ Industry Organizations state that the VCTG “anticipates that it will complete its work in the second quarter of 2026.”⁶⁵ MWF underscores that the new standard “is on track for completion next year”⁶⁶ and NCTA states that “the VCTG has made substantial progress”⁶⁷ Likewise, TIA states that “the waiver will be limited in duration due to the substantial progress already made by the VCTG, which is working towards an expected approval of the TIA-5050 next year.”⁶⁸

17. Based on CTIA’s assertions and as supported by the comments of other parties, we find that a two-year extension appropriately balances the need to ensure the development and incorporation into the Commission’s rules of a workable volume control technical standard with the need to ensure that consumers with hearing loss have access to full volume control functionality as soon as possible. We base this decision on the statements of CTIA, TIA, and other commenters that a new volume control standard will be available in the second quarter of 2026 and with the expectation that ANSI, or another appropriate party, will petition the Commission at that time to incorporate the new standard into the Commission’s section 20.19 hearing loss compatibility rules. We further base our decision on the statements of CTIA, Industry Organizations, and Samsung that two years is an acceptable amount of time to extend the waiver.⁶⁹ Our decision gives the VCTG additional time to finalize a new volume control

⁵⁷ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.9; CTIA Reply at 2 & n.4.

⁵⁸ CTIA Petition at 3; CTIA Reply at 2.

⁵⁹ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.8.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 3.

⁶¹ *Id.* at 4; *see also id.* at 8.

⁶² CTIA Reply at 6; *see also id.* at 2, 4, 6.

⁶³ Industry Organizations Comments at 1 & n.2; Samsung Comments at 7 & n.22; *see also* CTA Ex Parte Letter at 1.

⁶⁴ CTA Comments at 3; Industry Organizations Comments at 3; TIA Comments at 3.

⁶⁵ Industry Organizations Comments at 3.

⁶⁶ MWF Comments at 3.

⁶⁷ NCTA Comments at 2.

⁶⁸ TIA Comments at 3.

⁶⁹ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.9; Industry Organizations Comments at 1 & n.2; Samsung Comments at 3 & n.6; CTIA Reply at 2 & n.4; *see also* CTA Ex Parte Letter at 3 & n.12 (supporting at least a two-year extension); CTIA Ex Parte Letter at 3.

standard while continuing to allow consumers with hearing loss to purchase new hearing aid-compatible handset models that have a measurable level of volume control functionality.⁷⁰

18. Extending the waiver for a period longer than two years or leaving the deadline open-ended, as CTIA and other parties advocate, is unnecessary given the statements by CTIA, TIA, and other parties that the new standard will be balloted and approved by ANSI during the second quarter of 2026. Our goal is to ensure that the process of developing a new standard comes to a conclusion without further delay during the second quarter of 2026. As Accessibility Organizations point out, it has been eight years since the Commission adopted a volume control requirement, and we still do not have a workable volume control standard incorporated into the Commission's hearing aid compatibility rules.⁷¹ Extending the waiver in an open-ended way as CTIA and other parties advocate could encourage further delay in the development of a new volume control standard. We endorse neither an indefinite waiver of section 20.19(b) nor a decision to effectively repeal the codified volume control rule through grant of an indefinite waiver.

19. While we do not believe that the extension should be open-ended, we also disagree with Accessibility Organizations' argument that the extension should be limited to a year.⁷² As CTIA states, it is reasonably foreseeable that a one-year extension would simply lead to another request next year to extend the section 20.19(b) waiver.⁷³ Adopting a one-year extension would mean that the extension would terminate on September 29, 2026. Given that the new volume control standard will not be balloted and approved by ANSI until the second quarter of 2026, it seems highly likely that we would receive another request before September 29, 2026, to again extend the section 20.19(b) waiver. Our decision to extend the waiver by two years at this time avoids this problem and allows adequate time for the incorporation of the new volume control standard into the Commission's hearing loss compatibility rules after the standard is balloted and approved by ANSI during the second quarter of 2026. Our approach is also more efficient in that it requires parties to participate in one rulemaking proceeding rather than two as Accessibility Organizations suggest.⁷⁴

20. Further, a two-year extension provides handset manufacturers with more regulatory certainty than a one-year extension which is something commenters emphasize is necessary with respect to handset manufacturers being able to continue to use the temporary volume control standard.⁷⁵ While Accessibility Organizations is correct that the temporary volume control standard only requires handset manufacturers to disclose a handset model's actual conversational gain, they fail to acknowledge that once ANSI and TIA approve and publish a new volume control standard additional time will be needed before the new standard can be made the controlling standard.⁷⁶ Typically, when the Commission adopts a new hearing aid compatibility technical standard it also allows for a transition period before the new standard becomes the exclusive testing standard.⁷⁷ During this transition period, testing labs can adjust their testing equipment or buy new equipment and the Commission's Office of Engineering and

⁷⁰ CTIA Petition at 7–8; CTA Comments at 3; Industry Comments at 2; NCTA Comments at 4; Samsung Comments at 2; CTIA Reply at 5.

⁷¹ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 3.

⁷² *Id.* at 2, 4.

⁷³ CTIA Reply at 2 & n.4.

⁷⁴ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 3; Accessibility Organizations Ex Parte Letter at 2.

⁷⁵ CTA Comments at 1; Industry Organizations Comments at 8 & n.27; NCTA Comments at 4; Samsung Comments at 7; CTIA Reply at 6, 7 & n.25, 8.

⁷⁶ Accessibility Organizations Ex Parte Letter at 2.

⁷⁷ 2021 HAC Order, 36 FCC Rcd at 4576–77, paras. 22–25.

Technology can provide handset manufacturers and testing labs with testing guidance.⁷⁸ Typically, test labs only invest in new equipment and software after it becomes clear that the Commission will require compliance with a new standard.⁷⁹ While the balloting and approval process may signify consensus among the stakeholders participating in the revision effort,⁸⁰ it does not signify that handset manufacturers and testing labs agree that the new standard should be made immediately effective prior to it being incorporated into the Commission's section 20.19 hearing loss compatibility rules. Further, Accessibility Organizations does not address the procedural process the Commission would use to recognize the balloted and approved standard as the new temporary standard.

21. We are conscious, however, of Accessibility Organizations' concern that the process to develop a new volume control standard needs to keep moving along expeditiously to reach its conclusion.⁸¹ In order to keep the process on track, we extend the update requirement that we adopted as part of the existing section 20.19(b) waiver.⁸² Specifically, we agree with Accessibility Organizations' suggestion to require progress reports on the accomplishment of the quarterly milestones identified in TIA's update that CTIA links to in its petition.⁸³ We require CTIA, in coordination with TIA, to submit by December 31, 2025, an update that informs the public whether the third and fourth quarter 2025 milestones were met and if not why they were not met, and a second update by June 30, 2026, that informs the public whether the first and second quarter 2026 milestones were met and if not met, why they were not met.⁸⁴ While CTIA argues that updates are unnecessary,⁸⁵ we find that requiring these periodic updates will hold CTIA and TIA accountable for their statements that the extension will be of a short duration and that the new standard will be balloted and approved by ANSI in the second quarter of 2026. Further, these updates will be available to the public and consumers will be able to review these updates and be kept informed on the development and finalization of the new standard even though they may not directly participate in the VCTG.⁸⁶

22. Accordingly, CTIA in coordination with TIA, must file updates with WTB concerning the completion of the tasks referenced in TIA's update concerning the Delta-POLQA and ETSI DTS/STQ-314 testing methodologies for measuring distortion.⁸⁷ The pending December 31, 2025 update will address test plan development and initial lab testing/analysis/define normalization for the two test methodologies, as well as, the status of the audio file preparation for the ETSI DTS/STQ-314 testing

⁷⁸ CTIA Reply at 7–8 & n.25; *see also* CTA Ex Parte Letter at 2–3 (quoting CTIA Reply at 7–8 & n.25).

⁷⁹ CTIA Ex Parte Letter at 3. CTIA also states that testing capacity maybe effected by the Commission's equipment integrity efforts. *Id.* at 3 & n.10.

⁸⁰ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 3.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² *HAC Waiver Order*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8648, para. 37 (requiring ATIS to file a letter with the Commission on the one-year anniversary of the waiver order concerning the development of a new standard).

⁸³ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.8.

⁸⁴ If a new volume control standard becomes effective prior to the due date for one or both of these required updates, then it will be unnecessary for CTIA, in coordination with TIA, to file any remaining updates.

⁸⁵ CTIA Reply at 6 & n.21.

⁸⁶ Accessibility Organizations Comments at 2, 4; *see also* CTIA Reply at 6 & n.21.

⁸⁷ CTIA Petition at 3 & n.8; TIA Comments and attach. at 2; CTIA Reply at 2 & n.3. According to TIA, the VCTG is evaluating two methodologies for assessing distortion in mobile handset models related to volume control accessibility. The first is the Delta-POLQA methodology that compares Mean Opinion Scores (MOS) across volume levels using existing testing infrastructure, and the second is the ETSI DTS/STQ-314 methodology which proposes a new distortion metric compatible with AI-based noise suppression and real-world use cases. TIA Comments at 1.

methodology.⁸⁸ This pending December 31, 2025, update will also address round robin testing for the two testing methodologies. The pending June 30, 2026, update will address acceptance criteria for the two testing methodologies and ANSI balloting and approval for the new volume control technical standard. These pending updates must be filed electronically using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System in WT Docket Nos. 23-388 and 20-3.⁸⁹

23. For the foregoing reasons, we find good cause exists under the special circumstances of this case and that it is in the public interest to extend the existing waiver of section 20.19(b) by two years with a new expiration date of September 29, 2027, unless a new volume control standard becomes effective prior to this date. Under this extension of the section 20.19(b) waiver, new handset models may continue to be certified as hearing aid-compatible as long as the handset models meet the requirements of the temporary volume control standard as well as all other aspects of the 2019 ANSI Standard used to certify handset models as hearing aid compatible. In addition, as discussed above, we require CTIA, in coordination with TIA, to submit updates to the Commission that will keep the public informed on the progress of finalizing a new volume control standard that CTIA and TIA indicate will be balloted and approved during the second quarter of 2026.

24. *Paperwork Reduction Act.* This document does not contain new or substantively modified information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), Public Law 104-13. In addition, therefore, it does not contain any new or modified information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees, pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, Public Law 107-198, *see* 44 U.S.C. § 3506(c)(4).

25. *Additional Information.* For further information about this proceeding, contact Eli Johnson, FCC, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Competition & Infrastructure Policy Divisions, Eli.Johnson@fcc.gov.

IV. ORDERING CLAUSES

26. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to sections 4(i), 303(r), and 610 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 303(r), 710, and sections 0.331 and 1.3 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.331 and 1.3, that CTIA's Petition for Extension of Waiver concerning section 20.19(b) of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 20.19(b), IS GRANTED to the extent indicated herein.

27. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order IS EFFECTIVE upon release and the partial waiver of section 20.19(b) will remain effective until September 29, 2027, unless the Commission implements a permanent volume control standard prior to this date.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Joel Taubenblatt
Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

⁸⁸ We note that TIA's update indicates that the audio file preparation task has already been completed for the Delta-POLQA distortion measuring methodology. TIA Comments and attach. at 2.

⁸⁹ See <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>.