30 March 2005

John Whittingdale OBE MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A0AA

Dear John

We spoke earlier today about the letter which you forwarded from your constituent
Mr G L Mills of Tanglewood, The Ridge, Little Baddow, Chelmsford CM3 4RX. I
am sorry that it has taken so long to get back to you on this but I wanted to be sure
that as far as possible we had got to the bottom of your constituent's concerns.

Firstly, can I confirm that we do value the role of amateur radio to the UK, both as a
vehicle for fostering technical careers and research and for its use in times of
emergency.

Ofcom itself has not initiated any plans for removing or changing the frequency bands
allocated to amateur radio. (Indeed, such bands, being internationally allocated for
amateur use are very seldom changed.) However we think your constituent's
concerns have been raised by the European proposals for automobile short range radar
at 24 GHz and 79 GHz.

Automobile short range radar has considerable potential to improve road safety and
save pedestrians' lives. We consulted the Radio Society of Great Britain about the
European Commission proposals. Their view, which we and the Government
represented in the European discussions, was that automobile SRR in the 79 GHz
band should cause relatively little disruption to amateur radio.

I should emphasise that at neither band will amateur radio be displaced but there is the
possibility of some interference from automobile SRR devices (this is expected to be
limited because of the low power range of such devices).

In part as a result of the representations from the RSGB, we sought and secured a
series of restrictions on the use of the 24 GHz band by automobile SRR: it will be
used in this band only for a few years before such devices all migrate to the 79 GHz
band and its use in the UK will be limited to a fixed proportion (my advice is a
maximum of 7%) of new vehicles. In view of the representations made to us by
amateur radio users and others, even with these restrictions on use, we did not feel