

Samir Varma, Ph. D.
16 Windsor Lane
Cos Cob, CT 06807

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Mail Stop
Patent Board
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office
Attention: Vice Chief Administrative Patent Judges
Michael Tierney & Jacqueline Wright Bonilla
PTAB Notice of Proposed Rulemaking 2018'
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA
22313– 1450

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am an independent inventor with issued US patents as well as pending applications in front of the US Patent office. I have also been through multiple reexaminations and judicial proceedings for one of my patents. I am writing in support of the proposal of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office) to alter its claim construction standard used for interpreting inter-partes review (IPR), post-grant review (PGR), and the transitional program for covered business method patents (CBM) proceedings before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB).

I support the proposal to replace the broadest reasonable interpretation standard (BRI) for constructing unexpired patent claims that are used by the PTAB in IPR, PGR, and CBM with the Phillips standard, which is the standard the Federal Circuit Courts and International Trade Commission (ITC) use when interpreting patents. These changes will promote a “fair and balanced approach, providing greater predictability and certainty in the patent system” which will, in turn, increase judicial efficiency and reduce economic waste.

Sound patent policy depends on consistency in interpreting patent claims. Sound patent policy is dependent on interpretive consistency, which is why the Supreme Court ruled that the court, rather than a jury, should be the sole adjudicator in claim construction disputes. It is logical then that claim construction interpretation be consistent across adjudicatory bodies.

Furthermore, ensuring that there is a consistent patent review process will elevate U.S. industry because clarity in patent interpretation provides stability and predictability for patent holders. A predictable patent process will create a level of confidence with innovators, which will make them more likely to bring their patentable inventions to market. Predictability will also diminish risk aversion, and thereby encourage entrepreneurs to invest in new technologies.

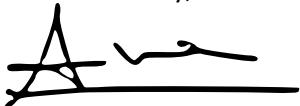
The current dual standards create unfairness for patent holders because the application of BRI and Phillips standards in different forums unfairly advantages the patent challenger. Challengers can argue for a broad scope before the PTAB then turn around and argue a narrow scope in district court. This ability to shift arguments creates a lose-lose scenario for patent holders. Patent holders must defend their patents in a broad claim construction standard for adjudicating validity in the PTAB, and a narrow claim construction standard when assessing infringement in district court.

The AIA has also created significant unfairness to patent holders. 86.8 percent of patents at issue under the America Invents Act (AIA) trial proceedings also have been subject to litigation in the federal courts. The current legal standard encourages challengers to start proceedings against the same patent holder in both forums. Such trends create extreme inefficiency in the courts and create an extreme waste of patent-holder dollars. The uniformity of standards will reduce the number of duplicative challenges across forums, freeing court schedules and allowing courts to make more immediate decisions on patent claims. Swifter decision making and an inability to forum shop, or retry a case from another angle, will save entrepreneurial dollars, court time, and promote a more business-friendly environment for those considering filing future patents.

The differing standards create completely unnecessary confusion and disadvantage patent holders. The Phillips standard considers a claim from the standpoint of a person of ordinary skill in the art, in light of the specification and the prosecution history of the patents. In contrast, the BRI standard considers the broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification, which at times allows the court to read the patent's coverage more broadly than intended upon conception. Because the Phillips standard relies on discovering the actual meaning of the claim, instead of its most expansive meaning, the Phillips standard is less likely to give broader coverage than is justified. The Phillips standard makes claim construction more consistent and predictable, and is more appropriate for adjudication of patent validity at the PTAB than the BRI standard.

The proposed shift to the Phillips standard should be extend to all pending PTAB trial proceedings in which PTAB has jurisdiction in order to discourage tactical filing before or after the rule change.

Sincerely,



Samir Varma