To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Bosco Kante and I am writing as the founder of an AI-first music tech & entrepreneurship education startup organized as a non-profit called HiiiWAV.   At HiiiWAV, we're passionate about breaking new ground at the intersection of artificial intelligence and music creation, particularly through our innovative Afro AI program. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to empowering musicians and artist-entrepreneurs, especially those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds (with a focus on Black artists), by leveraging the potential of open foundation models like Meta's LLAMA 2. In addition to text-to-text solutions, we have an emphasis on creating groundbreaking audio-to-audio and text-to-audio tools that are not just innovative but also accessible.

Open foundation models are the cornerstone of our strategy. They offer a viable and cost-effective alternative to the often prohibitive expense of using closed solutions or the daunting challenge of developing and training proprietary models from scratch. For artist-entrepreneurs, this approach is not just about access; it's about retaining ownership and control over the creative and commercial destinies of their innovations and companies.

Our Afro AI program is more than a project; it's a movement towards democratizing music production. By harnessing the power of open foundation models, we provide artists with the tools to transform their creative processes, enabling them to generate new sounds, compose music, and even create lyrics using AI. This technology opens up unprecedented possibilities for creativity and innovation, allowing artists to explore new horizons in music production and sound design without the barrier of high costs.

Moreover, the open-source nature of these tools means that the technology is not locked behind the gates of big corporations. This levels the playing field, allowing independent artists and small startups to compete more fairly in the industry. It's a paradigm shift that encourages a more inclusive, diverse, and vibrant music tech ecosystem.

HiiiWAV's Afro AI program exemplifies how open-source models can revolutionize industries by making advanced technologies accessible to all. It highlights our belief in the power of collaboration and community in driving innovation. By providing artist-founders with the means to build their companies and retain ownership, we're fostering technological advancement and nurturing a new generation of creators who are empowered to lead the way in the music industry's future.

We recognize that there are inherent dangers present with any new technology and open foundation models can be misused. However, we feel it's important to weigh the marginal risks and recognize that many of the dangers already exist based on currently available technologies and information.

In essence, HiiiWAV is at the forefront of marrying technology with artistic creativity to ensure that the future of music is diverse, innovative, and inclusive. Our commitment to open-source models and the democratization of AI tools stands as a signal for what is possible when technology serves not just to innovate, but to empower and uplift.

Here's how HiiiWAV's ethos and vision inform our approach to the questions posed by the NTIA:

1. **Defining "Open" or "Widely Available"**: The terms should encapsulate not just the accessibility of AI model weights but also embody the principles of equity, inclusivity, and transparency. "Open" ought to mean that models are accessible to underrepresented creators, providing them with tools to innovate and express themselves without prohibitive costs or barriers.
2. **Comparing Risks of Widely Available vs. Non-Public Model Weights:** Public model weights democratize innovation, but they also expose communities to risks like misuse of generative AI for creating harmful or deceptive content. Balancing these requires not just technological solutions but community-led governance structures that prioritize the protection of vulnerable groups.
3. **Benefits of Open Foundation Models:** Beyond accelerating innovation, open models offer a unique opportunity for marginalized voices to shape the AI narrative. They can be leveraged to amplify stories, preserve cultural heritage, and drive social change, offering a counter-narrative to dominant cultural representations.
4. **Other Relevant Components:** Training data transparency is crucial. The biases inherent in training datasets can perpetuate stereotypes and inequities. Open access to these datasets, coupled with robust oversight mechanisms, can mitigate risks and enhance the societal benefits of AI.
5. **Safety-Related or Technical Issues:** Establishing clear guidelines for ethical AI use, incorporating anti-bias measures, and creating platforms for community-based AI monitoring can help manage risks. This involves a concerted effort to include diverse voices in AI governance.

6. **Legal or Business Issues:** Intellectual property rights in the context of generative AI pose significant challenges for artists. Ensuring creators retain control over their work, even when AI is used as a tool for creation, is essential for fostering innovation while protecting artists' rights.
7. **Governance Mechanisms:** A multi-stakeholder approach, including artists, technologists, legal experts, and community leaders, should guide the governance of open foundation models. This can ensure a balance between innovation and ethical considerations, with special attention to the needs and rights of historically marginalized communities.
8. **Adapting to Technological Changes:** Flexibility, community engagement, and ongoing education are key. Policies and frameworks developed today should be revisable based on community feedback and the evolving technological landscape, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.
9. **Additional Considerations:** The impact of AI on employment, especially within creative industries, merits close examination. Strategies to support artists and creators as they navigate the transition to an AI-augmented future are crucial. Additionally, the role of AI in education and skill development for underrepresented communities should be explored, ensuring these technologies serve as bridges rather than barriers to opportunity.

Our response is rooted in a commitment to leveraging AI as a tool for empowerment, innovation, and justice. By prioritizing the interests and voices of artists and the Black community, we can navigate the challenges and opportunities of AI, ensuring it serves as a catalyst for positive change and equitable growth.