

Citizen Charges White House With Improper Phone Use

A San Francisco airlines engineer who says he was told by a White House official last October that "we record all incoming phone calls" said yesterday he intends to file a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission.

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren, advised of the complaint, said that "it was not the practice of the White House to record all incoming calls at that time and it is not the practice now."

The FCC already has completed one round of inquiries into the charge by the man, Robert E. McCann of Hillsborough, Calif. McCann wrote the FCC last Nov. 4

that a call he made to the White House on Oct. 29 was recorded without his prior knowledge and with no "beeper" signal as required by federal tariff regulations.

The FCC asked the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. to find out whether the White House had indeed violated the regulations. The company reported it had been told "that the White House is fully cognizant of and acts in accordance with applicable telephone company tariffs concerning the use of recording devices."

But a spokesman for C&P Telephone acknowledged yesterday that the firm never asked the White House whether in fact it had been recording all incoming

calls, as McCann said he had been told.

The only question was whether the White House was complying with tariff regulations, and "we were assured by them that they were complying," Fred Langbein, C&P's spokesman said. "we felt we had met our obligation."

McCann, in a telephone interview, said he is not satisfied with the response. Spurred by Monday's revelation in the Senate Watergate hearings that an automatic bugging system for presidential conversations has been in use in the Nixon White House, McCann said he intends to make a formal complaint as provided under FCC rules.