

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of
United States Cellular Corporation
File No.: 0009224814
FRN: 0004372322

ORDER

Adopted: July 15, 2022

Released: July 15, 2022

By the Chief, Office of Economics and Analytics and Acting Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau:

1. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Office of Economics and Analytics of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) have entered into the attached Consent Decree. This Consent Decree resolves their Investigation into whether United States Cellular Corporation (US Cellular or Company) applied for certain licenses that, if granted, would violate the Commission’s rules. Specifically, US Cellular failed to maintain its eligibility pursuant to certifications made by US Cellular under section 1.2105(a)(2)(v) and (vii),<sup>1</sup> and grant of certain licenses on which US Cellular bid would not comply with the Priority Access License (PAL) aggregation limit under section 96.31 of the Commission’s Rules (four-PAL aggregation limit).<sup>2</sup> The potential violation of such aggregation limit under section 96.31 would arise from attribution of PAL holdings in the same license area for both controlling interests and non-controlling interests of 10% or more in the spectrum.<sup>3</sup>

2. A primary objective of the bright-line four-PAL aggregation limit is to promote a minimum degree of ownership diversity by preventing one party from obtaining all seven available PALs in each license area, thereby “facilitat[ing] competition, innovation, and the efficient use of the 3.5 GHz band.”<sup>4</sup> To avoid a possible violation of the four-PAL aggregation limit, US Cellular will abide by the terms of the attached Consent Decree, including implementing a Compliance Plan and either (i) amending its long-form application to remove all licenses that, if granted, would cause it to exceed the four-PAL aggregation limit in an identified market, or (ii) amending its long-form application to remove enough PALs in each identified market to avoid exceeding the four-PAL aggregation limit. Frequencies that would have been authorized for use with a PAL had US Cellular or other similarly situated applicants not amended an application pursuant to the Consent Decree may be authorized for use by another eligible licensee with another PAL at a later date and, in the interim, remain immediately available for use pursuant to the applicable General Authorized Access (GAA) rules.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 47 CFR § 1.2105(a)(2)(v), (vii).

<sup>2</sup> 47 CFR § 96.31.

<sup>3</sup> See 47 CFR §§ 1.2104, 96.31, 20.22(b).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the case where both winners use the licenses to provide substitute services (e.g., mobile service) in the same geographic area, a minimum of two independent winners will promote competition. Promoting Investment in the 3550-3700 MHz Band, GN Docket No. 17-258, Report and Order, 33 FCC Rcd 10598, 10653, para. 105 (2018) (2018 Report and Order).

<sup>5</sup> See 47 CFR § 96.35(a).

3. The amendment of a long-form application to remove a license for which the applicant was the winning bidder constitutes a default pursuant to section 1.2109(c) of the Commission's rules.<sup>6</sup> Under that rule, a winning bidder who defaults or is disqualified for any reason is subject to the default payments established by section 1.2104(g).<sup>7</sup> Pursuant to section 1.925(a), the Commission may, however, waive specific requirements of its rules on its own motion.<sup>8</sup> We find that, in view of the unique factual circumstances of this case, application of section 1.2104(g)(2) would be unduly burdensome or contrary to the public interest.<sup>9</sup> In the instant case, granting an application with respect to winning bids for certain designated PALs and accepting the amendment of an application with respect to removal of other winning bids to the extent necessary to enforce the aggregation limit in section 96.31 serves the public interest because such action permits the Commission both to award PALs to those entities that have demonstrated through competitive bidding that they value those PALs most highly and to preserve the integrity of the four-PAL aggregation limit. Furthermore, Auction 105 is unique because the frequencies that are the subject of an amended application will remain available for General Authorized Access (GAA) use. The technical rules are the same for GAA and PAL users, meaning entities can use the same equipment in either tier, and can rely on GAA spectrum to meet their business needs, thereby allowing for immediate (or where GAAs already operate, continued) use of the spectrum for the benefit of the public.

4. The purpose of the default payment is to discourage a winning bidder from adopting a strategy of waiting until the actual license grant before deciding whether or not to accept the license, to the detriment of other bidders and the efficient and fair functioning of the auction process. A high bidder that does not fulfill its winning bid will delay the licensing of spectrum to others to use in the public interest. We find that applying the default payment rule to US Cellular in these unique circumstances would not serve that purpose. In the instant case, not only can the spectrum be put to immediate use, but US Cellular's default is based neither on a failure to pay timely its full bid amount, nor a failure to apply timely for the subject licenses. Rather, the default here is the product of the agreement reached between the Commission and US Cellular in the Consent Decree for the purpose of enforcing the PAL aggregation limit—a resolution that includes a compliance plan, reporting obligations, savings to Commission resources that might be spent on additional enforcement efforts, and other benefits that we deem to be in the public interest. For this reason, and after reviewing the terms of the Consent Decree and evaluating the facts before us, we find that it would not serve the public interest to apply section 1.2104(g)(2) to establish a default payment for its defaults on its winning bids for the Implicated Licenses under the terms of the Consent Decree.

5. Accordingly, given the unique circumstances here, we grant a waiver of section 1.2104(g)(2) to the extent that application of the rule would otherwise establish a default payment owed for amendment of a long-form application with respect to winning bids for the Implicated Licenses. We note that because no default payment obligation will be established for these licenses, US Cellular will not be a "former defaulter" for purposes of section 1.2106(a), which requires former defaulters to submit upfront payments equal to 50% more than the amount otherwise required for future auctions. That section would apply to an auction applicant that has been delinquent on a non-tax debt to a Federal agency; here, no debt has been established in this circumstance.

6. Reviewing the terms of the Consent Decree and evaluating the facts before us, we find that the public interest would be served by adopting the Consent Decree and terminating the referenced Investigation regarding US Cellular's compliance with sections 1.2105(a)(2)(v), (vii), 96.31, and 20.22(b) of the Commission's Rules in connection with Auction 105.

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<sup>6</sup> 47 CFR § 1.2109(c).

<sup>7</sup> 47 CFR § 1.2104(g)(2)(i)-(ii).

<sup>8</sup> 47 CFR § 1.925(a).

<sup>9</sup> 47 CFR § 1.925(b)(3)(ii).

7. In the absence of material new evidence relating to this matter, we conclude that our Investigation raises no substantial or material questions of fact as to whether US Cellular possesses the basic qualifications, including those related to character, to hold or obtain any Commission license or authorization.

8. Accordingly, **IT IS ORDERED** that, pursuant to sections 4(i) and 309 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (Act), 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 309, and sections 1.2104(g)(2), 1.2109(c), 20.22(b) and 96.31 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.2104(g)(2), 1.2109(c), 20.22(b), 96.31, and the authority delegated by sections 0.11, 0.21, 0.131, 0.231, 0.271, and 0.331 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.11, 0.21, 0.131, 0.231, 0.271, 0.331, the attached Consent Decree **IS ADOPTED** and its terms incorporated by reference.

9. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that, pursuant to sections 4(i) and 309 of the Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 309, and sections 1.925, 1.2104(g)(2), and 1.2109(c) of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.925, 1.2104(g)(2), 1.2109(c), relief is granted to US Cellular to the extent described herein. In light of this Adopting Order and the Consent Decree, no default payment obligation will be established for US Cellular and therefore US Cellular will not be a "former defaulter" for purposes of section 1.2106(a).

10. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the above-captioned matter **IS TERMINATED** in accordance with the terms of the attached Consent Decree.

11. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that a copy of this Order and Consent Decree shall be sent by first class mail and certified mail, return receipt requested, to Ms. Adriana Rios Welton, United States Cellular Corporation, 8410 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago, IL 60631.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Giulia McHenry  
Chief  
Office of Economics and Analytics

Joel Taubenblatt  
Acting Chief  
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

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

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
United States Cellular Corporation	)	File No.: 0009224814
	)	FRN: 0004372322
	)	
	)	

**CONSENT DECREE**

1. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Office of Economics and Analytics, of the Federal Communications Commission, and United States Cellular Corporation (US Cellular or Company), by their authorized representatives, hereby enter into this Consent Decree for the purpose of terminating the Investigation into whether US Cellular violated sections 1.2105(a)(2)(v), (vii), 96.31, and 20.22(b) of the Rules in connection with 3.5 GHz Priority Access Licenses (PALs) won in Auction 105.<sup>1</sup>

**I. DEFINITIONS**

2. For the purposes of this Consent Decree, the following definitions shall apply:
- (a) “Act” means the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.
  - (b) “Adopting Order” means an Order of the Bureau and Office adopting the terms of this Consent Decree without change, addition, deletion, or modification.
  - (c) “US Cellular” or “Company” means US Cellular and its affiliates, subsidiaries, predecessors-in-interest, and successors-in-interest.
  - (d) “Bureau” means the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission.
  - (e) “Bureau and Office” means collectively the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Office of Economics and Analytics of the Federal Communications Commission.
  - (f) “Commission” and “FCC” mean the Federal Communications Commission and all of its bureaus and offices.
  - (g) “Communications Laws” means, collectively, the Act, the Rules, and the published and promulgated orders and decisions of the Commission to which US Cellular is subject by virtue of its business activities.
  - (h) “Compliance Plan” means the compliance obligations, program, and procedures described in this Consent Decree at paragraphs 15-18.
  - (i) “Covered Employees” means all employees and agents of US Cellular who perform, supervise, oversee, or manage the performance of, duties that relate to US Cellular’s responsibility to comply with section 96.31 of the Rules.

<sup>1</sup> 47 CFR §§ 1.2105(a)(2)(v), (vii), 96.31, 20.22(b).

- (j) “Default Penalties” means the consequences that result pursuant to the Rules when a bidder defaults on a winning bid.
- (k) “Effective Date” means the date by which the Parties have signed the Consent Decree and the Bureau and the Office have issued the Adopting Order.
- (l) “Implicated Licenses” means licenses that, if granted, would cause US Cellular to exceed the four-PAL aggregation limit in a given market. See attached Appendix B for a list of the Implicated Licenses.
- (m) “Investigation” means the Investigation commenced by the Bureau and Office during review of US Cellular’s long-form application, Universal Licensing System (ULS) File Number 0009224814, to determine whether it violated sections 1.2105(a)(2)(v), (vii), 96.31, and 20.22(b) of the Rules with respect to the identified licenses in the attached Appendices A and B.
- (n) “Office” means the Office of Economics and Analytics of the Federal Communications Commission.
- (o) “Operating Procedures” means the standard internal Operating Procedures and compliance policies established by US Cellular to implement the Compliance Plan.
- (p) “Parties” means US Cellular, the Bureau, and the Office, each of which is a “Party.”
- (q) “Rules” means the Commission’s regulations, found in Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## II. BACKGROUND

3. Section 96.31(a) of the Rules limits the aggregation of PAL channels in any license area to only four at any given time.<sup>2</sup> Section 96.31(b) explains that the criteria in section 20.22(b) “will apply in order to attribute partial ownership and other interests for the purpose of applying the aggregation limit . . . .”<sup>3</sup> The attribution Rules in section 20.22(b), in relevant part, provide that controlling interests and non-controlling interests of 10% or more in spectrum shall be attributable.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, under section 1.2109(c), a “winning bidder who is found unqualified to be a licensee . . . or defaults or is disqualified for any reason after having made the required down payment, will be deemed to have defaulted, its application will be dismissed, and it will be liable for the payment set forth in section 1.2104(g)(2) or 1.2104(g)(3) of the Rules, whichever is applicable.”<sup>5</sup> Under the Rules, a former defaulter is subject to increased upfront payment requirements in future spectrum license auctions.<sup>6</sup>

4. On August 25, 2020, bidding concluded in Auction 105,<sup>7</sup> and in September 2020, the Bureau began its review of Auction 105 long-form applications. The Bureau accepted applications for

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<sup>2</sup> See 47 CFR § 96.31(a).

<sup>3</sup> See 47 CFR § 96.31(b).

<sup>4</sup> See 47 CFR § 20.22(b)(2)-(3).

<sup>5</sup> See 47 CFR § 1.2109(c).

<sup>6</sup> See 47 CFR § 1.2106(a), (d)-(e).

<sup>7</sup> See *Auction of Priority Access Licenses in the 3550-3650 MHz Band Closes*, AU Docket No. 19-244, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 9287 (OEA & WTB 2020).

filing on December 3, 2020,<sup>8</sup> January 19, 2021,<sup>9</sup> March 26, 2021,<sup>10</sup> and June 23, 2021.<sup>11</sup> The Bureau granted applications on March 12, 2021,<sup>12</sup> April 30, 2021,<sup>13</sup> July 12, 2021,<sup>14</sup> and December 9, 2021.<sup>15</sup>

5. As part of the long-form application review process, staff compared each applicant with other applicants that won PALs in the same license area to determine whether the applicants had attributable interests pursuant to section 20.22(b) and, if so, whether the applicants would exceed the four-PAL aggregation limit upon license grant. BlackRock, Inc. (BlackRock), a private equity firm, holds a 10% or greater interest in five Auction 105 applicants.<sup>16</sup> These five applicants were the winning bidders in overlapping license areas, and because common, non-controlling interests of 10% or more are attributable, the applied-for PALs of each of these five applicants would be attributable to each other. In total, the five applicants implicate a total of 462 PALs in 80 license areas in which the four-PAL aggregation limit would be violated if their applications were granted.

6. The Bureau and Office find good cause to reach this agreement. Granting the PALs designated for grant in Appendix A furthers the public interest by, to the extent possible, placing them in the hands of those entities that most highly value them while preserving the aggregation limit, or in the cases of the PALs listed in Appendix B being returned, making spectrum immediately available for General Authorized Access (GAA) use. Granting applicants relief from the application of the Rules that establish Default Penalties owed for PALs listed in Appendix B of this agreement will facilitate the use of the spectrum by enabling the grant of other PALs in the Implicated License areas or by enabling use of the spectrum for GAA. Also, allowing an applicant to amend its application to remove licenses with respect to winning bids for PALs listed in Appendix B will preclude immediate PAL licensing, but not preclude immediate utilization of the spectrum in light of the GAA Rules in the band.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the Bureau and Office find it is in the public interest to grant the PALs listed in Appendix A and have the PALs listed in Appendix B removed by amendment of the application according to the terms established herein, and thus, the Parties enter into this Consent Decree.

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<sup>8</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces that Applications for Auction 105 Licenses Are Accepted for Filing*, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 14080 (WTB 2020).

<sup>9</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces Additional Applications for Auction 105 Licenses Are Accepted for Filing*, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 798 (WTB 2021).

<sup>10</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces Additional Applications for Auction 105 Licenses Are Accepted for Filing*, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 5744 (WTB 2021).

<sup>11</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announces an Additional Application for Auction 105 Licenses Are Accepted for Filing*, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 9963 (WTB 2021).

<sup>12</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Grants Auction 105 Priority Access Licenses*, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 4926 (WTB 2021).

<sup>13</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Grants Additional Auction 105 Priority Access Licenses*, Public Notice, 36 FCC Rcd 7633 (WTB 2021).

<sup>14</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Grants Additional Auction 105 Priority Access Licenses*, Public Notice, DA 21-824 (WTB July 12, 2021).

<sup>15</sup> *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Grants Additional Auction 105 Priority Access Licenses*, Public Notice, DA 21-1529 (WTB Dec. 9, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> According to the five applicants' most recent Ownership Reports (FCC Form 602) on file in ULS, the percentage of BlackRock's interest in each applicant is as follows (in alphabetical order): Cable One (12.20%, *see* FCC File No. 0010091779); NorthWestern (14.70%, *see* FCC File No. 0009225384); SAL (11.65%, *see* FCC File No. 0010037270); Shenandoah (13.75%, *see* FCC File No. 0009224371); and US Cellular (16.70%, *see* FCC File No. 0010041382).

<sup>17</sup> *See* 47 CFR § 96.35(a).

7. The Parties negotiated the following terms and conditions of settlement and hereby enter into this Consent Decree as provided below.

### III. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

8. **Adopting Order.** The provisions of this Consent Decree shall be incorporated by the Bureau and the Office in an Adopting Order.

9. **Jurisdiction.** US Cellular agrees that the Bureau and the Office have jurisdiction over US Cellular and the matters contained in this Consent Decree and have the authority to enter into and adopt this Consent Decree.

10. **Effective Date.** The Parties agree that this Consent Decree shall become effective on the Effective Date as defined herein. As of the Effective Date, the Parties agree that this Consent Decree shall have the same force and effect as any other order of the Commission.

11. **Termination of Investigation.** In express reliance on the covenants and representations in this Consent Decree and to avoid further expenditure of public resources, the Bureau and Office agree to terminate their Investigation into matters described in paragraphs 1-7. In consideration for the termination of the Investigation, US Cellular agrees to the terms, conditions, and procedures contained herein. In the absence of new material evidence, the Bureau and the Office agree that the facts developed in the Investigation through the Effective Date, or the existence of this Consent Decree, will not be used to institute any new proceeding on its own motion against US Cellular concerning the matters that were the subject of the Investigation, or to set for hearing the question of US Cellular's basic qualifications to be a Commission licensee or hold Commission licenses or authorizations based on the matters that were the subject of the Investigation.

12. **Admissions.** US Cellular acknowledges that grant of the Implicated Licenses in its Auction 105 long-form application, without taking the actions set forth in this Consent Decree, would have otherwise created a violation of section 96.31, rendering the application defective under section 1.2109(c) with respect to those Implicated Licenses. US Cellular further acknowledges that, absent it taking the actions set forth in this Consent Decree, it would have defaulted on such licenses and would have been subject to the Default Penalties.

13. **Settlement Negotiation.**

(a) **Action on long-forms.**

1. US Cellular agrees to amend its application to remove the Implicated Licenses identified in Appendix B to reduce by one the number of PALs won in each implicated market where the applicant won more than one PAL;
2. The Bureau and Office agree to grant the licenses for markets that, after the Investigation, have not been identified as violating section 96.31(a) once granted. These licenses are identified in Appendix A.<sup>18</sup>

(b) **Withdrawal of pending actions.** US Cellular agrees to withdraw any pending Auction 105-related requests for relief, including but not limited to waiver requests.

(c) **Default Penalties.** The Bureau and Office agree to relieve US Cellular from the application of the Rules that would otherwise impose the Default Penalties on US

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<sup>18</sup> The application also includes other licenses not covered by the Investigation and hence not covered by this Consent Decree. The Commission plans to grant those other licenses on the same day as the licenses identified in Appendix A.

Cellular associated with amendment of the application to remove the Implicated Licenses identified in Appendix B.<sup>19</sup>

- (d) **Refund.** The Bureau and Office agree to refund the monies on deposit with the Commission associated with the Implicated Licenses in Appendix B.
- (e) **Certification.** US Cellular certifies that it has not had any communications with any other Auction 105 applicants that have Auction 105 long-form applications pending or BlackRock since January 25, 2022, regarding any aspect of the potential four-PAL aggregation limit violation, any settlement discussions with the Commission, and/or allocation of markets or licenses. US Cellular also certifies that, to the best of its knowledge and understanding, BlackRock has not communicated with any Auction 105 applicant that has an Auction 105 long-form application pending regarding these topics since January 25, 2022.

14. **Compliance Officer.** Within thirty (30) calendar days after the Effective Date, US Cellular shall designate a senior corporate manager with the requisite corporate and organizational authority to serve as a Compliance Officer and to discharge the duties set forth below. The person designated as the Compliance Officer shall be responsible for developing, implementing, and administering the Compliance Plan and ensuring that US Cellular complies with the terms and conditions of the Compliance Plan and this Consent Decree. In addition to the general knowledge of the Communications Laws necessary to discharge his or her duties under this Consent Decree, the Compliance Officer shall have specific knowledge of section 96.31 and the procedures necessary to implement the Compliance Plan detailed herein before assuming their duties.

15. **Compliance Plan.** For purposes of settling the matters set forth herein, US Cellular agrees that it shall, within ninety (90) calendar days after the Effective Date, develop and implement a Compliance Plan designed to ensure future compliance with section 96.31 and with the terms and conditions of this Consent Decree. US Cellular will implement, at a minimum, the following procedures:

- (a) **Operating Procedures.** Within ninety (90) calendar days after the Effective Date, US Cellular shall establish Operating Procedures that all Covered Employees must follow to ensure US Cellular's compliance with section 96.31 and this Consent Decree, and the Compliance Officer shall certify that such Operating Procedures have been established. US Cellular's Operating Procedures shall include internal procedures and policies specifically designed to ensure that US Cellular complies with section 96.31 and this Consent Decree.
- (b) **Compliance Manual.** Within ninety (90) calendar days after the Effective Date, the Compliance Officer shall develop and distribute a Compliance Manual to all Covered Employees and certify that such distribution has been completed.
  - i. The Compliance Manual shall explain the requirements of section 96.31 and this Consent Decree, and set forth the Operating Procedures that Covered Employees shall follow to ensure US Cellular's compliance with section 96.31 and this Consent Decree. US Cellular shall distribute any revisions to the Compliance Manual to all Covered Employees within thirty (30) calendar days of making such revisions.
- (c) **Compliance Training Program.** US Cellular shall establish and implement a Compliance Training Program on compliance with section 96.31 and the Operating Procedures. As part of the Compliance Training Program, Covered Employees shall be advised of US Cellular's reporting obligations under paragraphs 16-18 of this

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<sup>19</sup> See 47 CFR §§ 1.2104(g)(2); 1.2106(d)-(e). In light of this Consent Decree, no default payment will be assessed against US Cellular and therefore US Cellular will not be a "former defaulter" for purposes of 47 CFR § 1.2106(a).



Consent Decree and shall be instructed on how to disclose noncompliance with section 96.31 and/or the Operating Procedures to the Compliance Officer or his designees. All Covered Employees shall be trained pursuant to the Compliance Training program within six (6) months after the Effective Date, and, any person who becomes a Covered Employee at any time after the initial Compliance Training Program shall be trained within thirty (30) calendar days after the date such person becomes a Covered Employee. US Cellular shall repeat compliance training on an annual basis, and shall periodically review and revise the Compliance Training Program as necessary to ensure that it remains current and complete and to enhance its effectiveness. Six (6) months after the Effective Date, the Compliance Officer shall certify that such a training program has been established.

- (d) **Investor Notification.** US Cellular shall send a copy of this Order and Consent Decree to each of US Cellular's existing investors, in addition to those entities and individuals that become investors after the Effective Date, that have attributable interests in US Cellular, as defined by the Rules.

16. **Reporting Noncompliance.** US Cellular shall report any violations of section 96.31 and noncompliance with the terms and conditions of this Consent Decree within fifteen (15) calendar days after discovery of such noncompliance. Such reports shall include a detailed explanation of: (i) each known instance of noncompliance; (ii) the steps that US Cellular has taken or will take to remedy such noncompliance; (iii) the schedule on which such remedial actions will be taken; and (iv) steps that US Cellular has taken or will take to prevent the recurrence of any such noncompliance.

17. **Compliance Reports.** US Cellular shall file compliance reports with the Commission twelve (12) months after the Effective Date, twenty-four (24) months after the Effective Date, and thirty-six (36) months after the Effective Date.

- (a) Each Compliance Report shall include a detailed description of US Cellular's efforts during the relevant period to comply with the terms and conditions of this Consent Decree. In addition, each Compliance Report shall include a certification by the Compliance Officer, as an agent of and on behalf of US Cellular, stating that the Compliance Officer has personal knowledge that US Cellular: (i) has established and implemented the Compliance Plan; (ii) has utilized the Operating Procedures since the implementation of the Compliance Plan; and (iii) is not aware of any instances of noncompliance with the terms and conditions of this Consent Decree, including the reporting obligations set forth in paragraphs 16-18 of this Consent Decree.
- (b) The Compliance Officer's certification shall be accompanied by a statement explaining the basis for such certification and shall comply with section 1.16 of the Rules and be subscribed to as true under penalty of perjury in substantially the form set forth therein.<sup>20</sup>
- (c) If the Compliance Officer cannot provide the requisite certification, the Compliance Officer, as an agent of and on behalf of US Cellular, shall provide the Commission with a detailed explanation of the reason(s) why and describe fully: (i) each instance of noncompliance; (ii) the steps that US Cellular has taken or will take to remedy such noncompliance, including the schedule on which proposed remedial actions will be taken; and (iii) the steps that US Cellular has taken or will take to prevent the recurrence of any such noncompliance, including the schedule on which such preventive action will be taken.

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<sup>20</sup> See 47 CFR § 1.16.

(d) All Compliance Reports shall be submitted by July 17, 2023, July 16, 2024, and July 16, 2025.

18. **Filings.** All certifications pursuant to paragraph 15, reports of noncompliance pursuant to paragraph 16, and all Compliance Reports pursuant to paragraph 17 shall be filed with the Bureau by choosing a lead, active license call sign and uploading the Report as a “Pleading” to that license via the Bureau’s Universal Licensing System at <https://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsEntry/pleadings/pleadingsType.jsp>. At that link, US Cellular must select Pleading Type = “Status Report” and may select Attachment Type = “Confidential Pleading” if making a request under section 0.459 of the Rules that materials be withheld from public inspection.

19. **Termination Date.** The requirements set forth in paragraphs 14 through 18 of this Consent Decree shall expire thirty-six (36) months after the Effective Date.

20. **Waivers.** As of the Effective Date, US Cellular waives any and all rights it may have to seek administrative or judicial reconsideration, review, appeal, or stay, or to otherwise challenge or contest the validity of this Consent Decree, Adopting Order, or any action the Bureau and/or the Office take on US Cellular’s Auction 105 long-form application pursuant to this Consent Decree. US Cellular shall retain the right to challenge Commission interpretation of the Consent Decree or any terms contained herein. If either Party (or the United States on behalf of the Commission) brings a judicial action to enforce the terms of the Consent Decree or the Adopting Order, neither US Cellular nor the Commission shall contest the validity of the Consent Decree or the Adopting Order, and US Cellular shall waive any statutory right to a trial *de novo*. US Cellular hereby agrees to waive any claims it may otherwise have under the Equal Access to Justice Act<sup>21</sup> relating to the matters addressed in this Consent Decree.

21. **Severability.** The Parties agree that if any of the provisions of the Consent Decree shall be held unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unenforceability shall not render unenforceable the entire Consent Decree, but rather the entire Consent Decree shall be construed as if not containing the particular unenforceable provision or provisions, and the rights and obligations of the Parties shall be construed and enforced accordingly.

22. **Invalidity.** In the event that this Consent Decree in its entirety is rendered invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, it shall become null and void and may not be used in any manner in any legal proceeding.

23. **Subsequent Rule or Order.** The Parties agree that if any provision of the Consent Decree conflicts with any subsequent Rule or Order adopted by the Commission (except an Order specifically intended to revise the terms of this Consent Decree to which US Cellular does not expressly consent) that provision will be superseded by such Rule or Order.

24. **Successors and Assigns.** US Cellular agrees that the provisions of this Consent Decree shall be binding on its successors, assigns, and transferees.

25. **Final Settlement.** The Parties agree and acknowledge that this Consent Decree shall constitute a final settlement between the Parties with respect to the Investigation.

26. **Modifications.** This Consent Decree cannot be modified without the advance written consent of both Parties.

27. **Paragraph Headings.** The headings of the paragraphs in this Consent Decree are inserted for convenience only and are not intended to affect the meaning or interpretation of this Consent Decree.

28. **Authorized Representative.** Each Party represents and warrants to the other that it has full power and authority to enter into this Consent Decree. Each person signing this Consent Decree on

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<sup>21</sup> See 5 U.S.C. § 504; 47 CFR §§ 1.1501–1.1530.

behalf of a Party hereby represents that he or she is fully authorized by the Party to execute this Consent Decree and to bind the Party to its terms and conditions.

29. **Counterparts.** This Consent Decree may be signed in counterpart (including electronically or by facsimile). Each counterpart, when executed and delivered, shall be an original, and all of the counterparts together shall constitute one and the same fully executed instrument.

**For the Commission:**

Giulia McHenry, Chief  
Office of Economics and Analytics

Date:

Joel Taubenblatt, Acting Chief  
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

Date:

**For United States Cellular Corporation:**

Adriana Rios Welton  
Head of Legal and Government Affairs  
United States Cellular Corporation

Date:

## Appendix A

**PRIORITY ACCESS LICENSES  
TO BE GRANTED BY MARKET  
AUCTION ID: 105  
UNITED STATES CELLULAR CORPORATION  
FCC FILE NO.: 0009224814  
DATE OF REPORT: February 23, 2022**

<b>Legal Entity Name</b>	<b>Market Number</b>	<b>Market Description</b>
United States Cellular Corporation	D17013	CALHOUN, IL
United States Cellular Corporation	D17083	JERSEY, IL
United States Cellular Corporation	D17083	JERSEY, IL
United States Cellular Corporation	D17117	MACOUPIN, IL
United States Cellular Corporation	D17117	MACOUPIN, IL
United States Cellular Corporation	D24023	GARRETT, MD
United States Cellular Corporation	D24023	GARRETT, MD
United States Cellular Corporation	D24043	WASHINGTON, MD
United States Cellular Corporation	D24043	WASHINGTON, MD
United States Cellular Corporation	D29035	CARTER, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29035	CARTER, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29073	GASCONADE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29073	GASCONADE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29073	GASCONADE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29093	IRON, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29119	MCDONALD, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29119	MCDONALD, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29119	MCDONALD, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29139	MONTGOMERY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29139	MONTGOMERY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29163	PIKE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29163	PIKE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29179	REYNOLDS, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29179	REYNOLDS, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29181	RIPLEY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29181	RIPLEY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29211	SULLIVAN, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29211	SULLIVAN, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29211	SULLIVAN, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D51029	BUCKINGHAM, VA

United States Cellular Corporation	D51029	BUCKINGHAM, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51037	CHARLOTTE, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51037	CHARLOTTE, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51049	CUMBERLAND, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51049	CUMBERLAND, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51147	PRINCE EDWARD, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51147	PRINCE EDWARD, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D53069	WAHKIAKUM, WA
United States Cellular Corporation	D53069	WAHKIAKUM, WA
United States Cellular Corporation	D53069	WAHKIAKUM, WA
United States Cellular Corporation	D54007	BRAXTON, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54015	CLAY, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54015	CLAY, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54015	CLAY, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54019	FAYETTE, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54019	FAYETTE, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54025	GREENBRIER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54025	GREENBRIER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54057	MINERAL, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54057	MINERAL, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54057	MINERAL, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54067	NICHOLAS, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54067	NICHOLAS, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54101	WEBSTER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54101	WEBSTER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D55011	BUFFALO, WI
United States Cellular Corporation	D55011	BUFFALO, WI
United States Cellular Corporation	D55011	BUFFALO, WI

## Appendix B

**PRIORITY ACCESS LICENSES  
TO BE REMOVED BY MARKET  
AUCTION ID: 105  
UNITED STATES CELLULAR CORPORATION  
FCC FILE NO.: 0009224814  
DATE OF REPORT: February 23, 2022**

<b>Legal Entity Name</b>	<b>Market Number</b>	<b>Market Description</b>
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United States Cellular Corporation	D29093	IRON, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29119	MCDONALD, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29139	MONTGOMERY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29163	PIKE, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29179	REYNOLDS, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29181	RIPLEY, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D29211	SULLIVAN, MO
United States Cellular Corporation	D51029	BUCKINGHAM, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51037	CHARLOTTE, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51049	CUMBERLAND, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D51147	PRINCE EDWARD, VA
United States Cellular Corporation	D53069	WAHAKIYAKUM, WA
United States Cellular Corporation	D54007	BRAXTON, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54015	CLAY, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54019	FAYETTE, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54025	GREENBRIER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54057	MINERAL, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54067	NICHOLAS, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D54101	WEBSTER, WV
United States Cellular Corporation	D55011	BUFFALO, WI