



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU AND OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ANNOUNCE MODIFIED CITIZENS BROADBAND RADIO SERVICE DEVICE REAUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES

GN Docket Nos. 17-258 and 15-319

With this Public Notice, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) and the Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) direct Spectrum Access System (SAS) administrators that they are permitted to implement longer Citizens Broadband Radio Service Device (CBSD) reauthorization policies consistent with the methodology described in a September 18, 2023 letter from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).<sup>1</sup> As detailed further below, these policies will apply solely in geographic areas and portions of the 3.55-3.7 GHz band (3.5 GHz band) that are outside of the scope of current federal operations.

Currently, all CBSDs are reauthorized at least once every 300 seconds to ensure compliance with Commission rules. Specifically, under the Commission's rules governing the Citizens Broadband Radio Service, "within 300 seconds after the [Environmental Sensing Capability] ESC communicates that it has detected a signal from a federal system in a given area, or the SAS is otherwise notified of current federal incumbent use of the band, the SAS must either confirm suspension of the CBSD's operation or its relocation to another unoccupied frequency, if available."<sup>2</sup> The Commission's rules also require that "[i]f the President of the United States (or another designated Federal Government entity) issues instructions to discontinue use of CBSDs pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 606, SAS Administrators must instruct CBSDs to cease operations as soon as technically possible."<sup>3</sup> There is a similar set of requirements applicable to the 3.65-3.7 GHz band.<sup>4</sup> These requirements were designed to ensure that federal operations are continuously protected from harmful interference from Citizens Broadband Radio Service operations in the 3.5 GHz band.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Charles Cooper, Assoc. Admin., Office of Spectrum Mgt., NTIA, to Ronald T. Repasi, Chief, OET, FCC, and Joel Taubenblatt, Chief, WTB, FCC, (Sept. 18, 2023) (September 18, 2023 NTIA Letter), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10918103597534/1>.

<sup>2</sup> 47 CFR § 96.15(a)(4). Each CBSD must comply with any incoming commands from its associated SAS regarding any changes to power limits and frequency assignments within 60 seconds of receipt. *See* 47 CFR § 96.39(c)(2).

<sup>3</sup> 47 CFR § 96.15(a)(4). *See also* 47 U.S.C. 606.

<sup>4</sup> 47 CFR § 96.15(b)(4).

<sup>5</sup> The SAS administrators have implemented these requirements by establishing signaling protocols through an industry led process, specifically in this case the CBSD "heartbeat" procedure. Under this procedure, SASs send a "heartbeat" signal to each CBSD every 240 seconds indicating whether the CBSD is authorized to operate or not. If a CBSD receives a message that it is deauthorized, it must shut down within 60 seconds. *See* WInnForum, *Signaling* (continued....)

Since the rules were adopted to protect federal operations in the 3.5 GHz band, the SAS administrators have applied a 300 second maximum CBSD reauthorization period nationwide.<sup>6</sup> In its letter, NTIA informed the Commission of its determination that SAS administrators may adopt longer CBSD reauthorization procedures where doing so does not adversely affect federal operations in the 3.5 GHz band.<sup>7</sup> NTIA notes that “lengthening this reauthorization period from five minutes to 24 hours in geographic areas and portions of the spectrum band that are outside of the scope of current federal operations will help to provide a more stable and predictable spectrum environment for Citizens Broadband Radio Service users while ensuring an interference-free environment for critical federal operations.”<sup>8</sup>

We agree with NTIA that allowing SAS administrators to modify their implementation of the CBSD reauthorization period under these circumstances will create a more stable, predictable spectrum environment for all 3.5 GHz band users without jeopardizing the protection of critical federal operations from harmful interference. We also believe that permitting this implementation approach within geographic areas and portions of the spectrum band that are outside of the scope of current federal operations is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Commission’s Citizens Broadband Radio Service federal protection rules—namely, to ensure that incumbent federal operations are continuously protected from harmful interference from Citizens Broadband Radio Service operations in the 3.5 GHz band. This modified approach to implementation of CBSD reauthorization also ensures that SAS administrators will maintain the ability to timely respond to instructions from the President of the United States, or another designated Federal government entity, issued pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 606.<sup>9</sup>

Specifically, consistent with the NTIA letter,<sup>10</sup> we direct the SAS administrators to apply the following procedures for CBSD reauthorization:

- For grants in the 3550-3700 MHz band, CBSDs outside of Dynamic Protection Area (DPA)<sup>11</sup> Neighborhoods<sup>12</sup> may continue to transmit for up to 24 hours on the approved grants without SAS re-authorization.
- For grants in the 3650-3700 MHz band, CBSDs inside of DPA Neighborhoods may continue to transmit for up to 24 hours on the approved grants without SAS re-authorization.

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*Protocols and Procedures for Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS): Spectrum Access System (SAS) – Citizens Broadband Radio Service Device (CBSD) Interface Technical Specification*, WINNF-TS-0016-V1.2.7 (March 21, 2022), <https://winnf.memberclicks.net/assets/CBRS/WINNF-TS-0016.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*; see also 47 C.F.R. §§ 96.53 (e)-(g) and 96.63 (c), (l). □

<sup>7</sup> September 18, 2023 NTIA Letter at 1.

<sup>8</sup> September 18, 2023 NTIA Letter at 1.

<sup>9</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 606; 47 CFR §§ 96.15(a)(4), (b)(4), 96.63.

<sup>10</sup> September 18, 2023 NTIA Letter at 2.

<sup>11</sup> DPAs are pre-defined protection areas that extend beyond the coastline or that enclose a protected terrestrial radar facility, which may be activated or deactivated as necessary to protect DoD radar systems. See *Promoting Investment in the 3550-3700 MHz band*, GN Docket No. 17-258, Order, 33 FCC Rcd 4987 (WTB/OET 2018) (*DPA Waiver Order*). See also Letter from Paige R. Atkins, Assoc. Admin., Office of Spectrum Mgt., NTIA, to Julius P. Knapp, Chief, OET, FCC, and Donald Stockdale, Chief, WTB, FCC, (May 17, 2018) (2018 NTIA Letter). NTIA depicts the DPAs in Attachment A. This letter and the specific coordinates for the DPAs are available at <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/fcc-filing/2015/ntia-letter-fcc-commercial-operations-3550-3650-mhz-band>.

<sup>12</sup> The coordinates of the DPA Neighborhoods are available at: <https://www.ntia.gov/fcc-filing/ntia-letter-fcc-commercial-operations-3550-3650-mhz-band>.

- For grants in the 3550-3650 MHz band, CBSDs inside of DPA Neighborhoods shall continue to transmit for up to 300 seconds on the approved grants without SAS re-authorization.<sup>13</sup>

WTB and OET will consider any SAS implementing these modified procedures to be compliant with applicable rules, including rules regarding the Presidential shut down requirement.<sup>14</sup> We look forward to continuing our productive collaboration with NTIA, DoD, and industry stakeholders to promote efficient use of the 3.5 GHz band, expand commercial opportunities in the Citizens Broadband Radio Service, and safeguard the security of important federal operations in the band.

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*Additional Information.* For further information regarding this Public Notice, please contact Paul Powell, Associate Division Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division at [paul.powell@fcc.gov](mailto:paul.powell@fcc.gov) or 202-418-1613.

By the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Chief, Office of Engineering and Technology.

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<sup>13</sup> See 47 CFR § 96.15(a)(4).

<sup>14</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 606; 47 CFR §§ 96.15(a)(4), (b)(4), 96.63.