

**Remarks Of
FCC Chairman Michael Powell
At the
Industrial Telecommunications Association
Private Wireless Summit 2003
October 10, 2003
Washington, D.C.**

Thank you for that warm introduction and for inviting me here today to take part in the celebration of your 50th anniversary.

The Industrial Telecommunications Association has been an effective voice for the private wireless radio community. Over the years it has helped the Commission understand this community's changing spectrum needs and has helped devise ways for the Commission to effectively fulfill those needs. I look forward to working with you as we embark on the challenging road ahead.

The private wireless community serves a critical role in today's evolving telecommunications landscape and its contributions in this regard do not go unnoticed. The services that this community provides are the backbone of many important industries, including transportation, public utility, telephone and other utility infrastructures to name a few. Providing adequate access to spectrum reserves to support these operations and securing our homeland are important goals for the Commission. And let me be clear: we understand that commercial wireless services cannot meet all of your needs. Therefore, under this Commission there has been and always will be a critical role for the private wireless community.

Spectrum Policy Must Change

The dynamics of radio communications is constantly changing. The technological advancements have resulted in the introduction of new wireless applications that have differing spectrum requirements than those of more mature applications. As a result, spectrum policy must change. We have made substantial progress over the past few years, but there's more that needs to be done to increase opportunities for technological innovation and ensure that the full potential of the spectrum is reached.

To this end, it is imperative that the Commission step back and examine its spectrum management policies to see how to best support this growth and development in the future. One initiative that the Commission has launched in this regard is the Spectrum Policy Task Force. The Report released by the Task Force last year has provided a framework for us to follow in our regulatory responsibilities going forward.

Spectrum Flexibility is Crucial

Flexibility is the recurring theme. We must now craft policies that promote flexible spectrum use for newly allocated spectrum and that which is currently occupied. The crucial contributions of the private wireless community will not be overlooked and incumbents will be protected as we shift from the old established paradigm in an effort to realize more flexibility.

We'll move from "command and control" models to embrace new applications, such as wireless broadband. This is an exciting time for the wireless community and I ask for you to remain active, engaged, open-minded and patient as we proceed forward on this front.

Secondary Markets

As you know the Commission has adopted a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Secondary Markets proceeding. These steps move us closer to our regulatory goal of achieving flexibility. This item authorizes spectrum leasing in wireless services, adopts streamlined processing for categories of license transfer and assignment applications and seeks comment on additional steps to improve the functioning of secondary markets. We're very excited about this item and the market opportunities that will surface as a result of its adoption.

This is one of the Commission's more prominent efforts to promote access to spectral resources. The key thing to remember is that secondary markets mean more rights to you – our licensees. It should give you more tools to effectively use spectrum to increase productivity, streamline processes, and increase safety. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities that arise as a result of this action and to participate in the further notice.

Technological Innovation

As recommended by the Spectrum policy task force we are also moving forward to encourage the use of new wireless technologies for the purpose of achieving better spectrum efficiencies and new service creation. We have begun proceedings inquiring how smart radios which know their location can be used to share the TV spectrum with broadcasters without causing them interference. In addition, shortly we will be initiating a proceeding to determine how cognitive radios can be best used.

On the unlicensed front and as a result of a Task force recommendation we will be shortly initiating a proceeding which will add an additional 255MHz at 5 GHz for unlicensed use. We are hopeful that additional licensed and unlicensed spectrum in combination with secondary markets will create additional opportunities for private wireless.

800 MHz Proceeding

In addition to spectrum policy, homeland security is also at the forefront of my strategic plan for the Commission. Before and since Sept. 11th, the Commission has proactively examined ways to facilitate the security and reliability of our nation's critical infrastructure and traditional public safety communities. Public safety and private wireless users need reliable access to secure spectrum resources.

That is why the 800 MHz proceeding is so important to us. Finding a workable solution to this problem is a priority for the Commission. With that, I'd like to thank ITA, APCO, Nextel and other interested parties for their hard work in educating us about the interference problem. With all the information that we've received, my hope is to find a workable solution to this dilemma in the near future. We're still working internally to resolve these issues. Again, I'd like to assure you that this is an absolute priority.

Conclusion

Once again, congratulations on your 50th anniversary. I look forward to our continued partnership as we tackle so many of these difficult issues together.

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