



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSALS FOR MODIFYING 700 MHz PUBLIC SAFETY SPECTRUM TO ACCOMMODATE BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted an Eighth Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice) that seeks comment on whether certain channels within the 24 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band allocated for public safety use should be modified to accommodate broadband communications. The 700 MHz public safety spectrum is currently being used by television broadcasters during the digital television (DTV) transition but will become available for use by public safety agencies by February 18, 2009, when the DTV transition is completed.

Under a band plan adopted by the FCC in 1998, the 700 MHz public safety spectrum (764-776 MHz and 794-806 MHz) is divided in half between narrowband channels, which allow voice and low-speed data services, and wideband channels, which allow high-speed data and slow scan video services (see attached diagrams). Within the 12 MHz of paired wideband spectrum, 4.8 MHz is currently designated for general use and 1.8 MHz for interoperability, and the remaining 5.4 MHz is held in reserve for future public safety needs. General use spectrum licenses are subject to a regional planning process similar to that used in the 800 MHz public safety band. Under the current rules, the individual channels within the general use and interoperability wideband segments have a bandwidth of 50 kHz, and licensees can aggregate three 50 kHz channels up to 150 kHz.

In the December 2005 Intelligence Reform Act Report to Congress on public safety spectrum needs, the FCC recognized that it should expeditiously examine whether the 700 MHz public safety band plan could be modified to accommodate broadband communications. Today's Notice seeks comment on three specific proposals to modify the 700 MHz band plan submitted by the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council; Motorola, Inc.; and Lucent Technologies, Inc. All three plans propose combining the general use, interoperability, and reserve wideband segments in order to permit broadband communications. The proposals also support the creation of guard bands to protect narrowband voice operations. Today's Notice also invites additional proposals and seeks comment on the FCC's tentative conclusion not to alter the narrowband portions of the 700 MHz public safety band.

In the Seventh Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in this proceeding, the FCC sought comment on a variety of technical and operational rules for the 700 MHz public safety spectrum,

including a proposal by the Public Safety National Coordination Committee to adopt a wideband data interoperability standard, commonly known as “SAM” (Scalable Adaptive Modulation), and to require that all wideband radios be capable of supporting the SAM standard. Today’s Notice asks commenters to provide additional input and update the record regarding wideband interoperability and the SAM standard in light of proposals to accommodate broadband communications.

Action by the Commission on March 17, 2006, by Eighth Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 06-34). Chairman Martin and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, and Tate. Separate statement issued by Chairman Martin.

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