

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**

Re: Unlicensed Operation in the TV Broadcast Bands, ET Docket No. 04-186; Additional Spectrum for Unlicensed Devices Below 900 MHz and in the 3 GHz Band, Second Memorandum Opinion and Order, ET Docket No. 02-380

As President Obama recently said, “our nation’s success depends on strengthening America’s role as the world’s engine of discovery and innovation.” Today, the Commission takes a big step to open a new platform for American innovation. This is important. It will enhance our economy and strengthen our global competitiveness, lead to billions of dollars in private investment and to valuable new products and services – some we can imagine, and many we can’t.

It is another implementation of an important recommendation of the National Broadband Plan, which emphasized the vital role of spectrum to our economic future and the need for spectrum efficiency, spectrum recovery, and smart spectrum policy. As the National Broadband Plan explained, both licensed and unlicensed spectrum are important for a vibrant mobile ecosystem.

Today’s focus is on unlicensed spectrum, which offers unique opportunities to innovators and entrepreneurs. Today’s Order marks the Commission’s first significant release of unlicensed spectrum in 25 years.

This new unlicensed spectrum will be a powerful platform for innovation. And as we’ve seen time and again, when we unleash American ingenuity, great things happen.

We know from experience that unlicensed spectrum can trigger unexpected but hugely beneficial innovation. For example, years ago, there was a band of low-quality spectrum that was lying fallow. Nobody could figure out what to do with this so-called “junk band,” so the FCC decided to free it up as unlicensed spectrum.

The result was a wave of new technologies – baby monitors, cordless phones, and eventually a real game changer: Wi-Fi. Today, Wi-Fi is a multi-billion industry and an essential part of the mobile ecosystem.

As compared to the airwaves we released for unlicensed use in 1985, this “white spaces” spectrum is far more robust – traveling longer distances and through walls, making the potential for this unlicensed spectrum much greater.

One analyst estimates white spaces applications could generate more than \$7 billion in economic value annually.

We know what the first major application will be: super Wi-Fi. Super Wi-Fi is what it sounds like: Wi-Fi, but with longer range, faster speeds, and more reliable connections.

We can also expect, as we’ve seen now with Wi-Fi, enhanced performance from the mobile devices using licensed spectrum that we’ve come to rely on so heavily.

The FCC has already granted experimental licenses to a handful of cities, giving us an idea of the myriad ways super Wi-Fi will be put to use.

In Claudeville, Virginia, they are providing broadband access to a remotely located elementary school. In Wilmington, North Carolina, they are trialing “smart city” applications to manage traffic and monitor water quality at nearby wetlands. In Logan, Ohio they are using the white space to deliver Telemedicine to health care providers. Plumas County, California is utilizing “Smart Grid” technologies for its electricity network.

We’re seeing “machine-to-machine” Internet uses of this spectrum that could be its own harbinger of benefits to come.

These are just some of the applications we know about. But again what may be even more exciting are the applications that American innovators and entrepreneurs will invent.

One last point. Today’s Order is important not only for the innovation, investment and economic benefit it will unleash, but because of the competitive edge it will offer.

U.S. companies have already invested in research and development of super Wi-Fi technologies. Now they can take this technology out of the labs and onto the market.

Other countries have been looking at Super Wi-Fi. By giving the green light now, the United States will be the first nation to deploy this technology. We can have the investment here, the intellectual property developed and the products launched here, and then export our products globally – all contributing to U.S. job creation and economic growth.

