



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 19, 2010

The Honorable Michael E. McMahon
U.S. House of Representatives
323 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McMahon:

Thank you for your letter regarding proposals to reallocate the 700 MHz D Block for public safety programming. I have a strong appreciation for our first responders, and I am committed to achieving the best nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network for public safety communications.

The allocation of spectrum for public safety and the development of funding resources to make use of this spectrum present unique challenges both for Congress and the Commission. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) provided guidance for moving forward with these objectives, including a recommendation that Congress create funding resources to support both network construction and ongoing operations.

This is vital. Congressional funding is necessary for building a mobile broadband public safety network and delivering on the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission. The Commission has acted on NBP recommendations within its statutory authority, establishing – with the help of experts from the Department of Homeland Security and other federal partners – the Emergency Response Interoperability Center (ERIC) to guide technical standards development and help create a solid foundation for nationwide interoperable cooperation. This is necessary to ensure that a new network achieves the 9/11 Commission goal of interoperability. The Commission also recently provided waivers to twenty-one jurisdictions, authorizing them to initiate early build-outs of public safety broadband networks using the 10 MHz of the 700 MHz spectrum licensed to the Public Safety Spectrum Trust, subject to interoperability requirements.

Under current law, the Commission is obligated to auction the 700 MHz D Block spectrum for commercial use. I have directed the Commission's staff to provide assistance to Congress as it considers legislative action related to this matter.

Regardless of how much spectrum ultimately is allocated to public safety in addition to its current 24 MHz, I am committed to working with Congress, public safety officials, and the wireless community to facilitate creation of networks that protect Americans and prevent

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tragedies that can be avoided by better communications among first responders. Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot at the end.

Julius Genachowski