



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 13, 2013

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STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL ON PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING THE AUCTION OF THE H BLOCK

Today the Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau announced its intention to auction spectrum known as the H block in January 2014. The 10 megahertz of spectrum comprising the H block is part of a larger 65 megahertz of spectrum that Congress directed the Commission to auction in the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. This 65 megahertz of spectrum is laid out in a single list in Section 6401 of this law. Moreover, under this law the revenue raised from the auction of this 65 megahertz will serve as a down payment toward a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network—known as the First Responder Network Authority. More than twelve years after the horror of 9/11, it is essential that we make smart spectrum choices so that our first responders have the support they need to communicate in times of crisis.

I fear this approach fails that test. That is because holding a single auction of all 65 megahertz at once is bound to yield more interest, more bidders, and more revenue than dividing this spectrum up and holding an auction of the 10 megahertz H block alone. As Wall Street analysts have noted, splitting this spectrum up for auction will likely limit interest in the H block to only one, or possibly two bidders. If that is true, we will have a retail sale—not an auction. Moreover, it will mean reduced revenue from this spectrum—and less support for our nation's first responders.

I understand and respect that my colleagues feel differently. I sincerely hope that the approach announced today does not fall short and miss the mark.

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