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For Immediate Release

FCC SEEKS TO EXPAND USE OF & INVESTMENT IN 4.9 GHz BAND

WASHINGTON, March 22, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed action to promote more flexible and intensive use of the 4.9 GHz band, a segment of spectrum designated for public safety communications.

In a Sixth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today, the Commission seeks comment on proposals, technical in nature, to encourage greater use of and investment in this public safety band, drawing on input from the public safety community and other potential users. The Commission’s goal is to promote increased public safety use of the band and protect users from harmful interference while opening the spectrum to additional uses that will encourage a more robust market for equipment and greater innovation. The Commission seeks comment on whether an appropriate sharing mechanism could encourage more opportunistic use of the band while ensuring the priority, integrity, and security of public safety operations.

In 2002, the Commission designated 50 megahertz of spectrum in the 4.9 GHz band to public safety. Although nearly 90,000 public safety entities are eligible for licenses in this band, there are fewer than 3,200 licenses in use. With such a low level of usage, the Commission is concerned that the band has fallen short of its potential. Public safety organizations and others have cited possible reasons, including difficulty in acquiring equipment, the cost of deployment, and concerns about harmful interference. Today’s proposals are intended to address those concerns.

Action by the Commission March 22, 2018 by Sixth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 18-33). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn, O’Rielly, Carr and Rosenworcel approving. Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn, O’Rielly, and Carr issuing separate statements.

WP Docket No. 07-100

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