



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON DC

April 8, 2020

Mike O’Rielly
Commissioner

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my sincere appreciation for the extraordinary leadership you have shown on all communications policy matters, especially regarding 5G advanced wireless services, and to seek your direct assistance on an issue of great importance to our nation.

While the FCC operates as an independent agency, I have been impressed by the stellar team you have assembled and have been pleased to work with them, as appropriate, to ensure that America’s wireless networks remain the envy of the world and that our providers keep their premiere position as leaders in the wide-spread adoption and deployment of 5G. For America to be a global leader and win the race to 5G technologies, which we must do for both economic and national security reasons, we must actively identify and make available a key ingredient necessary for 5G networks and systems: mid-band spectrum. Yet, the pipeline is nearly empty, and our wireless providers lack sufficient mid-band spectrum to meet the exponential growth enabled by 5G networks and expected by users. I believe that only you personally, with your unique ability to cut through the bureaucratic stonewalling, can free the necessary spectrum bands to provide our wireless providers the means to succeed.

There should be little doubt as to the huge role U.S. wireless networks play in today’s society. This has been especially apparent, and urgently important, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, in which Americans are using wireless technology to reach emergency personnel at critical moments, locate needed information and notifications, communicate with loved ones, educate and entertain their children, work and operate businesses, and so much more. And, the critical messages that you and your Administration have conveyed to the public during this time have been magnified many times over due to the reliability and strength of American networks. The advent of 5G, with its superfast speeds, exponentially increased capacity, and exceedingly low latency, will deliver these benefits at a whole new level, which will in turn lead to expanded productivity in the industrial and business sectors. But, these benefits will only be fully realized if providers have all of the necessary tools—especially mid-band spectrum—to build and sustain advanced wireless networks.

It should be noted that, under Chairman Pai’s leadership, the current FCC has taken aggressive actions to address the mid-band spectrum shortage. Specifically, we are preparing to auction 70 MHz of licensed spectrum at the 3.5 GHz band, better known as CBRS, and are holding firm on a scheduled mid-December auction of 280 MHz of spectrum starting at 3.7 GHz, better known as the C-Band. We are also exploring whether to convert 75 MHz of spectrum at 4.9 GHz for commercial wireless services. Moreover, the Commission has taken initial steps to remove non-Federal users and permit commercial use, albeit at unacceptably low power levels, within the 3.3 to 3.55 GHz band.¹

¹ Although the Commission is currently examining the 3.3 to 3.55 GHz band, the portion from 3.1 to 3.3 remains an extremely viable candidate for 5G and should be examined as well.

Despite the good work by this Commission, these steps are simply not enough to address the exploding demand for spectrum for 5G services. While providers are taking helpful steps to improve spectrum efficiencies, these efforts will not come close to meeting overall demand. In fact, it is estimated that U.S. carriers will need upwards of 350 megahertz of mid-band spectrum over the next few years, beyond what will be reallocated in the CBRS and C-Band, to bring ample 5G, and eventually 6G, services to American consumers.

The only potential source of such large swaths of mid-band spectrum for 5G commercial wireless services is within the allocations held by U.S. Federal departments and agencies. Fortunately, it has been proven time and time again that Federal users can reduce their spectrum holdings without putting at risk their vital missions. Nonetheless, these same entities, especially the Department of Defense (DoD), which is the largest holder of the most ideal mid-band spectrum, are exceptionally reluctant to part with one single megahertz. Simply put, every excuse, delay tactic, and political chit is used to prevent the repurposing of any spectrum. On top of that, even when there has been agreement to reallocate a Federal band for commercial use, it takes multiple years to actually clear it and permit wireless providers to use it. The U.S. does not have the luxury of waiting years to provide spectrum for 5G services, especially when competitors such as China can move expeditiously to reassign spectrum frequencies by leveraging all the resources and power of their centralized, Communist regime.

Under your direction, the U.S. military has been vastly improved and better funded to ensure it regains its prominence as the finest and strongest force ever seen on the face of the Earth. At the same time, it is clear that more can be done to improve spectrum efficiency within DoD. Indeed, the reallocation of spectrum from DoD is not mutually exclusive with national security and must be pursued for the betterment of the American people and to ensure the continued success of our military under your leadership.

In sum, I believe that only with your personal and active engagement will DoD reduce its spectrum footprint in a timely manner to promote 5G services. I implore you to exercise your exemplary skills in responding to this critical need.

I thank you for your consideration of this request and stand ready to help you or your team in any way I can.

Sincerely,



Michael O'Rielly