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For Immediate Release**FCC PROPOSES ENHANCED COMPETITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO HELP CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

WASHINGTON, November 18, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed an enhanced competition incentive program to encourage licensees to offer opportunities for small carriers and Tribal Nations to obtain spectrum via lease, partition, or disaggregation. The program would also be available to an array of entities interested in providing wireless service in rural areas. This is the latest FCC action to close the digital divide and make further progress on Congress' goals in the MOBILE NOW Act to promote diversity of spectrum access and availability of rural service.

Transactions that qualify for the program would be those that facilitate spectrum use by entities unaffiliated with the licensee wherein the licensee designates at least 50% of the licensed spectrum to an assignee or a lessee through either a small carrier or Tribal Nation transaction or through a rural-focused transaction. The proposed program offers three primary benefits to participants:

- A five-year extension of the license terms for all parties to a qualifying transaction;
- A one-year extension of construction deadlines for all parties to a qualifying transaction in a partition and/or disaggregation, and to the lessor in a qualifying lease; and
- Alternate construction requirements for partition and disaggregation in rural-focused transactions.

The item adopted today proposes waste, fraud, and abuse protections as part of the ECIP. The FCC will seek comment on other measures in addition to this program, including alternative construction benchmarks for all wireless radio service licensees to promote innovative spectrum use, voluntary mechanisms and incentives to promote spectrum sharing, and flexibility to reaggregate licenses.

The proposals would create new opportunities for small carriers and Tribal Nations to get access to spectrum, and would result in greater competition and expanded wireless deployment in rural areas bringing more advanced wireless service including 5G to underserved communities.

Action by the Commission November 18, 2021 by Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 21-120). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

WT Docket No. 19-38

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