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For Immediate Release

FCC EXPLORES SPECTRUM SHARING APPROACHES FOR THE 42 GHz SPECTRUM BAND

Innovations in this Spectrum Could Inform Future Sharing Approaches

WASHINGTON, June 8, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today launched a proceeding to consider innovative sharing models in 500 megahertz of spectrum in the 42 GHz band. This examination of sharing models in high-band spectrum could not only inform how this band might best be used—particularly by smaller wireless service providers—but also inform future uses of sharing models in spectrum management.

With ever-increasing demand for wireless services and a finite supply of airwaves, it is more important than ever to focus on finding ways to share spectrum, a valuable resource. As the spectrum between 42-42.5 GHz is largely unused, the FCC proposes exploring an innovative, non-exclusive spectrum access model in this greenfield spectrum, which is ideal for experimentation due to the lack of incumbent licensees.

Through today’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the FCC will build a record on the benefits and drawbacks of implementing a shared licensing approach in this band. It will seek comment on three specific shared licensing approaches: 1) a nationwide non-exclusive licensing approach, in which licensees coordinate specific deployment sites with a third-party database; 2) a site-based licensing approach, in which licensees would apply for each deployment site directly with the FCC; and 3) a technology-based sensing approach, in which operators would employ such technologies to avoid harmful interference from one another.

The NPRM proposes licensing the 42 GHz band as five 100 megahertz channels, and seeks comment on other aspects of implementing a shared licensing approach, including coordination mechanisms, first-in-time protections, buildout requirements, technical rules, and potential synergies with the sharing approaches being considered for the Lower 37 GHz (37-37.6 GHz) band. It also proposes measures to protect radioastronomy services in the adjacent 42.5-43.5 GHz band.

Action by the Commission June 8, 2023 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-51).
Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving.
Chairwoman Rosenworcel issuing a separate statement.

WT Docket No. 23-158; GN Docket No. 14-177

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).