

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Upper C-band (3.98–4.2 GHz)*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, GN Docket No. 25-59  
(November 20, 2025).

At my first Commission meeting as Chair, I said that we would work to restore U.S. leadership in wireless—that we needed to get back to freeing up spectrum and ensuring that Americans would benefit from the robust buildout and use of commercial airwaves. Since then, we have made freeing up spectrum one of the core pillars of the agency’s Build America Agenda. And we are seeing good progress already.

In the secondary markets, large swaths of spectrum are now moving into the hands of competitors that can put it to productive use quickly. Indeed, just this week, one carrier announced that they have built out newly acquired spectrum to over 23,000 cell sites in record time—boosting 5G speeds by up to 80%.

We are full steam ahead on FCC auctions as well. Today’s item is a prime example—we are now proposing to auction up to 180 megahertz in the Upper C-band. Bringing this broad segment of mid-band spectrum to market will strengthen America’s foundation for emerging 5G and 6G innovations while delivering new and affordable broadband services to communities across the country.

But it is easy to forget how unlikely today’s milestone once seemed just a short time ago. As late as last year, America remained stuck in what I called a “spectrum malaise.” The FCC’s auction authority had lapsed for nearly two years, with no real signs of progress. Federal band studies were either stalled or delayed to some distant future. And there was no plan to free up even a single megahertz of additional spectrum for commercial use.

Fast forward a few months—and America is getting back on track. At that very first Commission meeting earlier this year, we voted to start a proceeding to examine opportunities for more intensive use of the Upper C-band. Then the White House initiated a ten-week “spectrum sprint” to study ways we could free up hundreds of megahertz of spectrum. And President Trump has leaned in—making it clear that getting results on these issues is a top priority for the Administration.

Combined, these actions generated fresh enthusiasm and ultimately paved the way for the spectrum provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill spearheaded by Senator Cruz. Those provisions restored the FCC’s auction authority and established a real spectrum pipeline—one with hard deadlines, clearing targets, and candidate bands. For our part, the One Big Beautiful Bill requires the FCC auction at least 100 megahertz in the Upper C-band by July 2027 and at least 300 megahertz total by 2034.

Completing a rulemaking *and* finishing an auction in less than two years would be a tall order under the best of circumstances. Here, though, the task is made even harder by the need to accommodate satellite users in the Upper C-band and certain radio altimeters onboard aircraft in the adjacent band.

But our team at the FCC is up to the challenge. Today’s item was finished at breakneck speed—only a few months after Congress restored our auction authority.

Success in the Upper C-band doesn’t just mean moving fast. The lightning speed with which the FCC must act requires seamless interagency coordination, especially with our federal partners at the FAA and NTIA. It also requires extensive cooperation and information sharing between the wireless and

aviation sectors. We have been working hard with all of those stakeholders, and I am pleased with the collaboration we've been seeing.

Of course, we are far from mission accomplished. Looking ahead, federal agencies and industry stakeholders alike must stay focused so consumers win from innovation in the Upper C-band as quickly as possible. That means delivering on a timely auction *and* a timely transition. We must also continue to focus on efficiency and execution. That includes accommodating relevant incumbent users within a reasonable budget and completing a generational upgrade of radio altimeters through new standards that are fully resilient to 5G services for years to come. We cannot expect anything less.

We can land this plane by replicating our successes from the Lower C-band proceeding. After all, it provides a playbook for many of the same issues we face today. When we auctioned 280 megahertz in the Lower C-band back in 2020, we confronted an unprecedented set of challenges—especially when it came to incumbent satellite services. The FCC's talented team rose to the occasion and found a path forward.

That hard work paid off. Today, the Lower C-band powers new and competitive offerings from in-home broadband to high-speed mobile offerings from coast to coast. In fact, the FCC's work on spectrum, including the Lower C-band, is one reason that consumers have been benefiting from falling prices, especially for in-home broadband services delivered over 5G networks.

I am confident that we will do it again. My special thanks to Susan Mort, Paul Powell, Janet Young, David Hu, Andrew McArdell, and Joel Taubenblatt at the Wireless Bureau for their tireless efforts in this proceeding. And I want to thank our federal partners at the FAA and NTIA in particular for their collaboration.