

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN THOMAS E. WHEELER**

Re: *Amendment of the Commission's Rules with Regard to Commercial Operations in the 1695-1710 MHz, 1755-1780 MHz, and 2155-2180 MHz Bands*, Report and Order, GN Docket No. 13-185

Everyone at the Commission is ready for this winter to be over. With today's agenda, the Commission officially declares that winter is over and the Spring of Spectrum has begun, which is at least as important as opening day of the baseball season!

Thanks to years of effort by people from across this building and across the federal government and industry, the spectrum pipeline is reopening.

We recently completed our first auction of mobile broadband spectrum since 2008. Our H-Block auction made 10 megahertz of spectrum available, and raised \$1.56 billion in the process, a significant down payment on FirstNet.

This Report and Order establishing service rules for AWS-3 moves us closer to holding an auction for 65 megahertz of spectrum this Fall, the most since the 700 MHz auction in 2008. Even a year ago, no one was sure we'd come to this day. And while there may be disagreements about some of the details around the edges, make no mistake, making this spectrum available for auction for commercial use is a home run no matter how you look at it.

The new capacity will expand the workhorse AWS-1 commercial wireless band to enable faster wireless speeds and more capacity to help satisfy consumers' voracious appetite for mobile data.

This proceeding represents a step forward in spectrum policy. Some of the spectrum being auctioned is already available in the Commission's inventory. But 40 megahertz of the spectrum to be auctioned is used nearly exclusively by federal agencies today.

A long and unprecedentedly candid and purpose-driven discussion among federal and commercial users about how to enhance spectrum efficiency through both clearing and sharing has brought us to this point. I commend NTIA, DOD, DOJ, the White House, and committees on Capitol Hill for their leadership in enabling commercial use of the 1755-1780 MHz band. I also commend NOAA for spearheading the effort to make the 1695-1710 MHz band available for commercial use.

Today is a big step in the process that will lead to the AWS-3 auction this Fall. Make no mistake about it, however, we, together with our Executive Branch colleagues, need to organize a fast process to finalize the technical details that must be resolved before this auction can take place. The clock is ticking. We pledge the full support and commitment of the FCC to this important effort. We all are working against a shot clock without much time on it.

Making these airwaves available for flexible, commercial use is not natural for incumbent spectrum holders. We appreciate their willingness to find solutions to accomplish that goal, however, we are mindful that protection zones and coordination are still issues being debated. As a result, the Order defaults to nationwide coordination zones that no one (including the DoD) feels is an adequate solution.

In other words, there is more work to be done to ensure the success of this auction.

I expect our efforts will result in a pre-auction Public Notice that sets out the rules of the road for new entrants in the band and provides greater certainty to incumbents. We expect we will be able to tailor the coordination zones and procedures to meet the expectations of stakeholders coming out of last year's CSMAC discussions.

As usual, we will also seek comment on auction rules and procedures for the future AWS-3 auction.

And finally, we are working with federal partners to release additional information to inform bidders in the forthcoming auction, recognizing that we also have to protect sensitive information about federal systems for national security reasons.

Working together, as we have already on this item, we will get this right and free up significant amounts of spectrum.

Thank you to the Wireless Bureau and to the Office of Engineering and Technology for your leadership on this important item. And I want to particularly thank John Leibovitz and Julie Knapp, who have personally worked tirelessly on these issues for several years.