

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Amendment of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules for Unlicensed Operations in the Television Bands, Repurposed 600 MHz Band, 600 MHz Guard Bands and Duplex Gap, and Channel 37, and Amendment of Part 74 of the Commission's Rules for Low Power Auxiliary Stations in the Repurposed 600 MHz Band and 600 MHz Duplex Gap, Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions, Report and Order, ET Docket No. 14-165, GN Docket No. 12-268*
(August 6, 2015)

The universe of people who know why the Commission's Part 15 rules matter is—let's admit it—small. But the universe of people who use Part 15 services is big—really, really big. In fact, the odds are you will use an unlicensed device authorized under our Part 15 rules today. It could be the shiny new tablet or laptop you used to go online with coffee and Wi-Fi this morning. Or maybe it was the old cordless phone you dusted off to make a quick call. It could have been the baby monitor you used overnight or the remote control you pressed in the morning to get out of the garage and make your way to work. Or perhaps it was the Bluetooth you used in the office or the health monitoring equipment you will use at home tonight.

Our Part 15 policies—which establish the parameters for unlicensed devices that operate in so many of our spectrum bands—are essential to the use of unlicensed spectrum. And the use of unlicensed spectrum is now an essential part of everyday, modern life.

But it was not always this way. Thirty years ago the Commission struggled with what to do with a bunch of underused frequencies in the 900 MHz, 2.4 GHz, and 5.8 GHz bands—bands that were initially designed for industrial, scientific, and medical uses. The services in these bands never materialized. In fact, so little was happening in this spectrum, these airwaves were known as “garbage bands.” The conventional wisdom was that they were junk. They were scraps of spectrum where demand for wireless licenses would just be limited.

But then our predecessors at the Commission turned conventional wisdom on its head. They did more than just dismiss these bands as junk. They abandoned the traditional practice of providing licenses to single operators to control these specific bands for specific purposes and instead opened them to the public. And while the impact of this decision wasn't clear at the time, or even when Part 15 rules were revised in 1989, the results are everywhere today. This forward-thinking led to the development of Wi-Fi, which is now responsible for billions of dollars of economic activity every year. It also led to the development of countless innovative devices we rely on every day. It will lead us forward, too, to the coming Internet of Things.

So, we need to keep the cool coming—and with the changes coming to the 600 MHz band, we need to find ways to create more possibilities for unlicensed use. By and large, we do that today by updating our Part 15 rules. We expand the spectrum available to unlicensed devices. We codify rules to allow unlicensed wireless microphones to continue operation in the 600 MHz band. We increase the power levels for unlicensed devices serving rural areas in order to broaden their service range. At the same time, we bolster the amount of information in white space databases to help alleviate interference concerns.

I believe this decision will have real impact. Because by building on our Part 15 policies from the past—we can expand the future of unlicensed services, technologies, and innovations. That's exciting—and I look forward to seeing what develops.