

Spectrum Management Reform: Key to the Future of Wireless

Reforming our nation's spectrum policies is of paramount importance to wireless consumers. Wireless minutes of use have grown by an average of 68 percent over the past three years, and tens of millions of new cell phone users are expected to enter the market in the next several years. The continued growth of wireless voice, data and broadband offerings will depend on access to additional spectrum to accommodate consumers' appetite for improved quality and new services. Reform of the spectrum management process, particularly how spectrum is allocated, is an essential step in ensuring that wireless will have a known, predictable path to more spectrum over the next decade and beyond.

CTIA supports:

- Maximizing the flexibility of spectrum use through the adoption of "flexible" allocation and service rules established before spectrum is assigned or made available to new users, so that these rights can be factored into auction decisions.
- Incentives designed to promote efficient use of the spectrum. Certain basic mechanisms for promoting efficiency, such as rigorous pre-allocation cost-benefit analyses and licensing practices that encourage applicants with concrete and realistic spectrum use plans, can and should be applied to all spectrum bands.
- Clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of spectrum users, especially the regarding interference protection, is a key element of reform.

CTIA supports the Task Force's recommendation that future spectrum policies should move away from command-and-control regulation towards an increased reliance on both the exclusive use and commons models, where appropriate. The exclusive use model, with its "property-like" rights of exclusivity, flexibility and transferability, creates a strong incentive to put spectrum to its highest valued use and should be applied to most spectrum bands.

The wireless industry sees new and innovative growth in the marketplace each day. There has been a great deal of interest in advancing deployment of Wi-Fi, and many of our members have acquired this new technology and are making it part of their business plans. We understand that additional "commons" spectrum may be needed to accommodate these new unlicensed technologies. Recently, the NTIA, FCC, Department of Defense and industry representatives came together and agreed to modify the United States' position on unlicensed devices in the 5 GHz band for the World Radio Conference. The agreed position provides 255 MHz (between 5470 MHz and 5725 MHz) for unlicensed devices by resolving the interference concerns of federal users, principally the Department of Defense. This also provides globally harmonized spectrum for unlicensed technologies. CTIA is pleased that this consensus has been forged. This would appear to satisfy additional spectrum needs for unlicensed technologies for the foreseeable future. It is essential that the existing rights of licensed users to remain free from interference and the existing responsibilities of unlicensed users to remedy any such interference should it occur must be made explicit in this and any future additional unlicensed allocations. Unlicensed users should gain no new rights above and beyond the current circumstances under which they operate. Additionally, as encouraging as these new technologies are, we must not lose sight of the fact that obtaining increased access to additional *harmonized* and *licensed* spectrum is the most pressing challenge facing wireless, both in the near and far terms.

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