



THE NEED FOR SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT REFORM

The development of new wireless technologies promises to accelerate the availability of broadband and dramatically change the way that people live, work, and play. Third Generation (“3G”) wireless technologies, for example, will provide American consumers with broadband connections to the Internet at any time and any place. Unlicensed wireless services, such as WiFi, will provide inexpensive wireless connectivity in the home or office and broadband access at many local “hot spots” around town. These and other wireless technologies will continue to evolve – yielding benefits to consumers, businesses, and the U.S. economy as a whole.

The explosion of new wireless technology and the ever-increasing popularity of wireless services are increasing demand for spectrum. Sound spectrum policy, therefore, is critical to ensuring the development of innovative wireless technologies and the delivery of spectrum-based Internet services to all Americans. Policymakers must establish a spectrum policy framework that increases spectrum access, availability, and efficiency. This framework should ensure that:

- Sufficient spectrum is available in time to meet market needs;
- Spectrum is harmonized worldwide, to the greatest extent possible;
- Spectrum is unencumbered and free of harmful interference; and
- Spectrum users have maximum feasible flexibility in how the spectrum is used.

1. Spectrum policies must evolve towards flexible and market-oriented models.

Policies that promote flexible use of spectrum allow wireless companies to respond quickly to market needs. Consequently, the rights of licensees should be broadly and clearly defined, subject to interference restrictions. Policies should also promote secondary markets for spectrum.

2. Interference protection remains essential to effective use of the spectrum.

Technological innovation allows spectrum to be used more intensively, however, interference erodes the ability of licensees to use spectrum efficiently. Harmful interference also reduces service quality and increases cost to consumers. Spectrum policies should protect existing services from interference, while promoting the ability of new services to evolve. Example: Grouping spectrum “neighbors” with technically compatible characteristics.

3. Spectrum policies should be balanced, promoting both exclusive spectrum usage rights and creating open access to spectrum “commons.”

Under an “exclusive use” model, licensees have exclusive rights to flexible-use spectrum. Examples: Cellular and PCS. This model is preferred where service quality is important, particularly in spectrum that is heavily used. Under the “commons” approach, frequencies are shared on an unlicensed basis, with no right to protection from interference. Example: WiFi. These spectrum-use models, as well as the services they support, can be complementary and both should be supported. “Exclusive use” and “commons” spectrum, however, should be separate to promote the most efficient deployment of both, without the risk of interference to either.

Contact: Don Brittingham, 202-589-3785, Donald.C.Brittingham@Verizon.com