



For Immediate Release
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Fact Sheet on Spectrum Management

Taking Action to Improve Spectrum Management

Presidential Action

- President Bush signed an Executive Memorandum creating the Spectrum Policy Initiative to develop recommendations for improving spectrum management policies and procedures.
- The Department of Commerce will chair the Initiative.
- The purpose of the Initiative is to promote the development and implementation of a U.S. spectrum policy that will foster economic growth; ensure our national and homeland security; maintain U.S. global leadership in communications technology development and services; and satisfy other vital U.S. needs in areas such as public safety, scientific research, federal transportation infrastructure, and law enforcement.
- The existing legal and policy framework for spectrum management has not kept pace with the dramatic changes in technology and spectrum use. The Spectrum Initiative will help develop a U.S. spectrum policy for the 21st century.

The Importance of Spectrum

- Spectrum contributes to significant innovation, job creation, and economic growth. It is vital to scientific discovery and technological advances. It is critical to the ability of first responders to react to natural disasters and terrorist attacks and essential to the military's ability to fulfill its mission of protecting our nation.
- Recent years have witnessed enormous growth in spectrum-based technologies and uses of wireless voice and data communications systems by businesses, consumers, and government. Today, there are more than 140 million wireless phone customers and, increasingly, businesses and consumers are installing WiFi systems to allow wireless computing on their premises.
- The Federal Government makes extensive use of spectrum for radars, communications, geolocation/navigation, space operations, and other national and homeland security priorities.

How the Initiative Will Work

- The Initiative is comprised of two activities:
 1. The Federal Spectrum Task Force will produce a set of recommendations for improving spectrum management policies and procedures to increase the efficiency and beneficial use of spectrum by the Federal Government.
 2. The Department of Commerce will hold a series of public meetings to assist in its development of a set of recommendations for improving policies and procedures for use of spectrum by state and local governments and the private sector.
- Within one year, the Secretary of Commerce will provide the President recommendations to:

- Facilitate a modernized and improved spectrum management system;
- Facilitate policy changes to create incentives to increase the efficiency and beneficial use of spectrum and to provide a higher degree of predictability and certainty in the spectrum management process;
- Develop policy tools to streamline the deployment of new and expanded services and technologies, while preserving national security, homeland security, public safety, and encouraging scientific research; and
- Develop means to address the critical spectrum needs of national security, homeland security, public safety, federal transportation infrastructure, and science.

Building on a Foundation of Success

While the Initiative will facilitate improvements in spectrum management, the Administration has achieved significant successes within the current system.

- The Administration has identified new spectrum for advanced third generation (3G) wireless services and technologies for consumers. In July 2002, the Department of Commerce released a plan in concert with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Department of Defense to make 90 MHz of spectrum available in the future for 3G wireless services while accommodating critically important spectrum requirements for national security.
- The Administration has identified how to make available additional spectrum at 5 GHz for wireless data communications, called Wireless Fidelity (WiFi). The Department of Commerce reached an agreement in February 2003 with the private sector and the Department of Defense on a technical solution that the United States is now able to present in international spectrum discussions.
- The Administration, in conjunction with the FCC, approved the use of ultrawideband (UWB) technology, which enables broadband connections and assists in the performance of critical safety services. During 2002, the Department of Commerce worked closely with the FCC to authorize mechanisms to accommodate UWB wireless technology without causing serious impact to critical radio communications services.
- The Administration has proposed several legislative changes and program initiatives to improve the spectrum management process, including: (1) providing the FCC with new authority to set user fees on unauctioned spectrum licenses; and (2) creating a Spectrum Relocation Fund to streamline the process for reimbursing government users, facilitate their relocation, and provide greater certainty to auction bidders and incumbents.

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