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February 22, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 GHz to 4.2 GHz Band*, GN Docket No. 18-122

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On February 19, 2019, David Don and Brian Josef of Comcast met separately with Will Adams, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Brendan Carr, and Erin McGrath, Wireless Legal Advisor to Commissioner Michael O’Rielly. On February 21, the above Comcast representatives met with William Davenport, Chief of Staff and Senior Legal Advisor for Wireless to Commissioner Geoffrey Starks.

During the meetings, we discussed the importance of protecting existing C-Band services for the hundreds of millions of Americans that rely on video programming delivered via C-Band every day. We also explained that, if such protection can occur, the Commission can and should move quickly to allocate and assign mid-band spectrum for terrestrial wireless use through a transparent FCC auction. We described how a transparent FCC auction is superior to the C-Band Alliance proposal, which runs counter to the public interest and should be rejected. We further discussed how a transparent FCC auction conducted under Section 309(j) can build on the Commission’s recent success in making available mid-band spectrum in the CBRS proceeding and addressed the interrelationship between the two proceedings. The attached presentation guided our discussion.

Please direct any questions to the undersigned.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Brian M. Josef
Brian M. Josef
Comcast Corporation

Attachment

cc: Will Adams
Erin McGrath
William Davenport



Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band

**GN Docket No. 18-122
February 2019**

3.7-4.2 GHz C-Band – Heavily Utilized

- Comcast and NBCUniversal rely on the C-Band extensively.

~84%

of Comcast's cable channels' primary signals received *via C-Band*

900+

small/midsize cable systems rely on HITS *via C-Band*

114 million+

households rely on NBC affiliates receipt of video *via C-Band*

2,000+

MVPD headends receive NBCUniversal cable network content *via C-Band*

- **C-Band spectrum remains the ideal medium** for video distribution; there is no comparable substitute.
- **The FCC must ensure these important services are protected.** With a balanced approach, 5G goals can be expeditiously met without interference to C-Band downlinks that would harm American consumers.
- **Critical technical questions** in the record about the C-Band Alliance (CBA) proposal remain unanswered, despite ample opportunity for CBA to show their work.

Importance of C-Band Spectrum

- **Ensuring sufficient spectrum, including mid-band,** to help close the digital divide and secure U.S. leadership in next generation wireless services is important.
- **The Commission can and should move quickly** to allocate and assign more mid-band spectrum for terrestrial wireless use, building on its success in finalizing 150 megahertz for CBRS.
- **Transparency, widespread participation, and a disinterested administrator** are critical in making such important spectrum available for 5G. A backroom beauty contest with private parties picking winners and losers should be a non-starter.
- **A C-Band reallocation that does not fully protect incumbents would be unwise** in spectrum heavily utilized for services that remain highly important to consumers' day-to-day activities.

CBA Proposal – A Black Box in Terms of Protecting Incumbents

- **The record remains devoid of rigorous analysis.** There is no way to objectively view this record as demonstrating that incumbents will be protected.
- **Promise to launch new satellite raises more questions than it answers.**
 - When and how can 8 new satellites can be launched to preserve C-Band capacity?
 - Would any of these satellites actually supplement the fleet, or merely replace sub-optimal satellites or those nearing end of life?
- **Filters do not exist and would not be a panacea if they did.** Filters only mitigate interference; they do not prevent it.
- **CBA has made no C-Band FSS price commitments.** Prices generally go up when supply goes down, making this a conspicuous and telling omission.

CBA Proposal – Legally Problematic

- **The Commission is legally compelled to auction this spectrum.** Mutual exclusivity requires an auction, and multiple parties are clearly interested here.
- **Section 309(j)** reflects Congress’s direction for competition, no excessive concentration of licenses, opportunity for a wide variety of applicants, recovery for the public of the value of spectrum, and no unjust enrichment.
- **CBA’s purported “precedent” is inapposite.**
 - CBA’s examples of private spectrum transactions (Spectrum Co., XO, Straight Path, Fiber Tower) actually support an auction, not an end-run of an auction.
 - These licenses were initially auctioned and licenses reclaimed by the FCC in connection with those transactions have been, or soon will be, auctioned.
- **Congress contemplated that the C-Band would be auctioned.** RAY BAUM’S Act expressly envisions “the assignment of new licenses by ***competitive bidding***.”
- **The Commission cannot subdelegate its authority to reallocate spectrum for flexible use, or to create and assign new terrestrial C-Band licenses.**

CBA Proposal – Contrary to the Public Interest

- **The Commission has a proven track record of transparency and balancing the interests of buyers, sellers, existing users, and the American public.** CBA is untested, has an agenda of its own, and could take years.
 - The FCC could conduct an auction and transition in the same 18-36 month timeframe, with transparent, enforceable deadlines. CBA has no transition plan or schedule and opposes deadline enforcement.
 - Auction proceeds could be used to make incumbents whole, or new licensees could be required to shoulder Transition costs directly. Auction revenues could help fund Congressional priorities.
- **CBA would *not* help middle America – it would leave it behind.** CBA has incentives to sell only to the largest carriers who may never deploy in rural areas.
- **CBA “commitments” are meaningless and unenforceable.** All commitments are expressly conditioned on adoption of its proposal “*in all material respects.*”
- **It would set a terrible precedent for the Commission to bow to CBA’s threats.**

Charting A Path Forward

- **Protecting incumbents is a must.** Hundreds of millions of Americans rely on current C-Band services every day.
- **The Commission can quickly move toward an auction** with both speed and care.
- **CBA's proposal violates Sec. 309(j), is riddled with uncertainty, and should be rejected.**
- **An FCC auction would get it right, and can proceed expeditiously.** Given the importance of mid-band spectrum, it is critically important that the U.S. does not permit private parties to pick winners and losers.