Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on Status of Federal Government Relocation from AWS-3 Bands	)	WT Docket No. 18-104

COMMENTS OF 2014 AWS SPECTRUM BIDCO CORPORATION

2014 AWS Spectrum Bidco Corporation (Bidco)[1] hereby submits these comments in response to the Public Notice (Notice) issued by the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) in the above-captioned proceeding with respect to a potential extension of the initial term for licenses in the 1695-1710 MHz, 1755-1780 MHz, and 2155-2180 MHz bands (collectively, AWS-3).[2] In the Notice, the Bureau seeks comment on, among other things, whether "an extension of the initial license term (and associated build-out deadlines) [is] warranted for all AWS-3 licenses granted to date, in light of the status of Federal government relocation."[3] Bidco urges the Commission to extend the initial term for all AWS-3 licenses granted to date, including those in the unpaired A1 and B1 blocks, to provide sufficient time for government relocation to be completed in some bands and coexistence mechanisms to be developed in other bands. Only in this way will licensees have a meaningful opportunity to meet their build-out obligations.

As the Commission knows, while government users in many portions of the AWS-3 spectrum will be relocating their operations, that is not the case in the A1 and B1 blocks. This

[1] Bidco holds 18 AWS-3 licenses in the unpaired A1 and B1 blocks at 1695-1710 MHz.

[2] *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on Status of Federal Government Relocation from AWS-3 Bands*, WT Docket No. 18-104, Public Notice, DA 18-346 (WTB 2018).

[3] *Id.* at 2.

spectrum will not be cleared of federal incumbents, and instead these incumbents and the new, non-federal licensees must develop and implement long-term coexistence plans to protect the federal incumbent operations while enabling commercial use of the spectrum.[4]

These federal incumbents, which include space-to-Earth operations in the MetSat service, operate earth stations that receive weak signal data from geostationary and polar orbiting meteorological satellites. The long-term coexistence mechanisms required between new, non-federal AWS-3 licensees and these federal incumbents present novel issues, as coordination between a commercial service and a weak signal satellite service of this type has never been attempted and presents a significant number of technical uncertainties. As an initial matter, coordination agreements between non-federal licensees and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the federal satellite ground station operator, will require stakeholders to reach consensus on RF propagation and interference models, basic elements of which still require research and development. In partnership with NOAA this process has thus far enabled Bidco to conduct detailed site surveys and RF spectrographic analysis at key earth station facilities. NOAA and Bidco also have discussed required interference protection criteria at each site, methods of predicting interference through simulation, methods of detecting and reporting interference through monitoring, and methods of rapidly resolving interference. NOAA and Bidco have created and distributed draft coordination agreements for further discussion and analysis. Despite the significant progress the partnership between NOAA and Bidco has produced to date, these efforts have also raised a number of questions that need to be resolved. Many of these questions require highly detailed, time consuming technical analysis to find solutions that both ensure federal incumbent operations are sufficiently protected while enabling the new, non-federal licensees to maximize use of the spectrum. Additional time will also be required after the establishment

[4] *See Amendment of the Commission's Rules with Regard to Commercial Operations in the 1695-1710 MHz, 1755-1780 MHz, and 2155-2180 MHz bands*, Report and Order, WT Docket No. 13-185, FCC 14-31, at ¶ 19 (2014) (*AWS-3 Order*) (stating that commercial use of the 1695-1710 MHz band is "subject to successful coordination with Federal incumbents in the 27 Protection Zones" identified by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration).

of such agreements and procedures, and the initiation of commercial operations in the A1 and B1 blocks, to provide for additional refinement of the technical assumptions and interference models upon which the agreements and procedures were based to ensure that federal incumbent operations are adequately protected without unduly encumbering the utility of the commercial service.

Moreover, federal spectrum monitoring systems that are a necessary component of A1 and B1 coexistence remain in the early stages of development.[5] As a result, there remain significant uncertainties associated with the design, implementation, and long-term efficacy of these systems, which has the effect of further constraining the ability of commercial service providers to launch service and build out their networks at the scale necessary to satisfy the Commission's build-out requirements.

Finally, although only the A1 and B1 license areas near the 27 Protection Zones surrounding federal incumbent earth station sites are subject to the coexistence requirement, it is clear that the delays created by the coexistence considerations described above will impact development for the commercial band in all geographic regions, as such coordination negotiations will necessarily have an impact on the standards for equipment to be deployed in the band generally. Until the coexistence regime is finalized, which will then provide licensees assurance that their deployment can cover their entire user population and operate under a uniform network management system, licensees will not be able to deploy at scale throughout the A1 and B1 blocks.

Granting an extension for all AWS-3 licenses issued to date, including licenses for spectrum in which federal users will relocate and those subject to long-term coexistence obligations, would also be consistent with the Commission's decision to adopt the same license terms and build-out requirements for all AWS-3 licenses.[6] Thus, extension of the initial license term and accompanying build-out requirements should be granted to all AWS-3 licensees, who are similarly situated both under the

[5] *See id.* at ¶ 19, n.72 ("CSMAC WG1 recognized that as a part of the sharing framework there is a need for a clear and consistent coordination process and that a key component of the coordination process is the implementation of a real-time spectrum monitoring capability.").

[6] *See AWS-3 Order* at ¶¶ 131, 145.

Commission's rules and with respect to the need to complete a number of steps in conjunction with federal incumbents before commercial service can be initiated at the scale the Commission envisioned in adopting the 12-year initial license term and build-out requirements.

For the foregoing reasons, the Commission should extend the initial term and accompanying build-out deadlines for all AWS-3 licenses granted to date, including those in the A1 and B1 blocks, for the full three additional years proposed in the *AWS-3 Order* and the Notice.[7] Such an extension is needed to provide the time necessary to both complete federal government relocation and successfully coordinate operations between non-federal licensees and federal incumbents that will not be relocating. .[8]

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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[7] *Id.* at ¶ 132; Notice at 2.

[8] This would be consistent with extensions the Commission has granted in similar circumstances, where the need to negotiate and implement technical mechanisms necessary to enable commercial operations required additional time. *See, e.g., Promoting Interoperability in the 700 MHz Commercial Spectrum; Requests for Waiver and Extension of Lower 700 MHz Band Interim Construction Benchmark Deadlines*, WT Docket Nos. 12-69, 12-332, Report and Order and Order of Proposed Modification, FCC 13-136 (2013).