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March 21, 1995

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

William F. Caton, Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Re: Ex Parte Communication in PR Docket 92-235

Dear Mr. Caton:

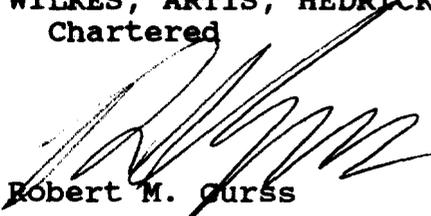
Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, enclosed herewith for filing with the Commission are two copies of a letter delivered to Ms. Kathryn Hosford of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau regarding the above-referenced proceeding.

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

WILKES, ARTIS, HEDRICK & LANE,
Chartered

By:


Robert M. Gurs

Attorneys for Association of
Public-Safety Communications
Officials-International, Inc.
(APCO)

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Kathryn Hosford

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SECRETARY

BY HAND

Ms. Kathryn Hosford
Private Radio Division
Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
Room 5114E, 2025 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

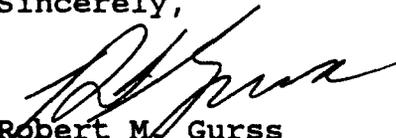
Re: PR Docket 92-235

Dear Kathryn:

Attached for your information (and distribution to the refarming task force) is a position paper prepared by APCO which states succinctly some of its reasons for supporting a two-step migration path for refarming the frequency bands below 512 MHz. Please call me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Two copies of this letter and the attachment will be submitted to the Secretary for filing in PR Docket 92-235.

Sincerely,


Robert M. Gurss
Counsel for APCO

Attachment

APCO POSITION ON TWO STEP VERSUS ONE STEP REFORMING

March 20, 1995

APCO has been informed that there are some who still believe that there is an advantage in a single step approach to narrow banding the frequencies below 470 MHz. In this light APCO feels it necessary to once again state its position advocating a two step migration process.

First, it must be emphasized that APCO Project 25, the effort to develop standards for digital public safety communications equipment, is a joint project between local and state governments, the federal government and industry. A two step migration plan has been adopted by this group with almost unanimous agreement. The dissenting votes are from a few manufacturers who have opted for a different technology. A large number of major manufacturers are in agreement, and some are actually producing equipment that meets the proposed standards for the first phase of the Project.

Secondly, the Federal Government has officially adopted a 12.5 kHz channellization scheme, effective immediately. It is highly desirable to have a uniform standard for both federal and non-federal use. This will result not only in a broader base for procurement, but will enhance the potential for inter-communications between agencies.

The most compelling reason for a two step approach for public safety is graceful migration. This must also be a major concern in the Refarming effort. While it has been argued that a single step plan would be more cost effective, as equipment would only have to be changed out once, nothing could be further from the truth. This ignores the real life fact of the composition and of the procurement practices of public safety communication systems.

With only a few exceptions, public safety agencies are unable to acquire sufficient funds for a complete system change out. Conversely, system requirements change on a day to day basis. Systems require expansion to provide better coverage and to serve more users. New technologies which are highly desirable, become available. Equipment historically has been purchased annually to meet these requirements, as well as the normal year to year requirement for replacement due to deterioration and obsolescence. Thus, the majority of public safety systems are composed of equipment which varies greatly in age and condition. A plan for a gradual upgrade, to meet financial capability is an absolute requirement.

To APCO's best knowledge, there has been no equipment designed for any very narrow band technology which is compatible with existing equipment. Thus, an entire change out would be required. If this were to occur, the new user

would find themselves with a system which would not offer inter-operability with other agencies systems, or even with the systems of other public safety departments within a single agency. Inter-operability for mutual aid purposes, both in day to day and in disaster situations is absolutely essential. All states and many local jurisdictions have developed mutual aid plans which are entirely dependent upon compatible communication equipment.

As required by Project 25, and as envisioned by public safety users, the two step plan would first move to 12.5 kHz channels, and then to 6.25 kHz or equivalent. All 12.5 kHz equipment would be backward compatible to existing equipment. As the second step, all Phase 2 equipment would be backward compatible to Phase 1 equipment (and perhaps to analog as an option).

In the case of the VHF High Band, channelization to 7.5 kHz is supported. While this may at first glance appear as a one step migration, it is actually two, for even though channel spacing today is 15 kHz, actual equipment being offered is primarily 25 kHz bandwidth. The new equipment would have to be backward compatible to this standard.

This seamless migration path offers many advantages.

1. The opportunity to gradually amortize existing equipment and systems, many of which have been recently purchased.
2. The ability to phase in modern 12.5 kHz equipment that is fully operational with existing equipment. This would pertain both to mobile units and to infrastructure.
3. Assurance that mutual aid plans would continue to function, and even be enhanced, as more modern equipment becomes available.
4. Avoidance of major one time financial outlay, while at the same time not prohibiting any individual agency from a one step migration if they believe it to be most advantageous to their individual requirements.

In summary, adoption of a one step plan would result in a completely chaotic situation in which current users would be unable to upgrade or expand existing systems, but would be forced by economics to operate at a sub-standard level until financially able to change out entire systems.

For these stated reasons, APCO Project 25 and the public safety users which APCO International represents, consider the two step approach to be an absolute necessity, and strongly oppose any effort to mandate a one step process, regardless of any extended mandatory dates for implementation of such a decree.