

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials – International
International Association of Chiefs of Police
International Association of Fire Chiefs
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Sheriffs’ Association

April 27, 2015

Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda
United States Coordinator, International Communications & Information Policy
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-5820

Chairman Thomas Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: 800 MHz Band Reconfiguration along the U.S. – Mexico Border, WT Docket 02-55

Dear Ambassador Sepulveda and Chairman Wheeler:

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, (“APCO”), International Association of Chiefs of Police (“IACP”), International Association of Fire Chiefs, Inc. (“IAFC”), National Association of State EMS Officials (“NASEMSO”) and National Sheriffs’ Association (“NSA”), (hereinafter “Public Safety Organizations”) respectfully urge the U.S. Department of State and the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) to intensify efforts to implement the 2012 Protocol to facilitate expeditious 800 MHz band reconfiguration along the U.S. – Mexico Border.

APCO, IACP, and IAFC were part of the original “Consensus Plan” that formed the basis of the FCC’s initial 2004 *Report and Order* in this proceeding, and have continued to work closely with the FCC, the 800 MHz Transition Administrator, Sprint and public safety first responders across the nation to ensure that “rebanding” occurs in an effective and efficient manner to reduce and eliminate interference to public safety systems.

800 MHz band reconfiguration is essentially complete across the nation -- except for Washington State and eighty-two counties in California (including Los Angeles and San Diego), Arizona (including Phoenix and Tucson), and major portions of Nevada (Las Vegas), New Mexico (Las Cruces), and West and South Texas (including El Paso and Brownsville/McAllen). Progress on 800 MHz band reconfiguration along the Mexican border has lagged behind the rest of the United States due to the complexities involved in revising the international agreements between the two countries governing shared use of the 800 MHz band in the border area. After significant effort by the Department of State and the FCC, the United States and Mexico adopted a revised 800 MHz Protocol in 2012 that will enable U.S. border area public safety agencies to retune their systems and increase the availability of 800 MHz spectrum on both sides of the border.

While the FCC and U.S. stakeholders have moved forward in implementing the Protocol on the U.S. side of the border, their progress is currently stalled because the Mexican government

has not yet directed Mexican 800 MHz operators in the border area to retune to their new channels, in accordance with the Revised Protocol. This blocks U.S. public safety licensees throughout the border area from retuning to their new U.S. channels.

As a result of this delay, public safety communications systems along the U.S. – Mexico Border still face the risk of harmful interference from nearby commercial operations. Virtually every state and local public safety agency in the border area has secured funding to improve and modernize their 800 MHz systems as part of the rebanding process. However, they cannot take full advantage of these funds until 800 MHz licensees on the Mexican side of the border have first been retuned to make U.S. public safety replacement spectrum available consistent with the Revised Protocol. It is therefore absolutely critical that the Mexican transition occur without any further delay so that U.S. public safety agencies in the border area can retune and obtain the same interference protection as their counterparts throughout the U.S.

We therefore urge the Department of State and the FCC to escalate this matter with your respective counterparts in Mexico and make this a top U.S. priority.

Respectfully,

John W. Wright, President, APCO
1426 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Chief Richard Beary, President, IACP
44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314

Chief G. Keith Bryant, President, IAFC
4025 Fair Rudge Drive, Fairfax, VA 22033-2868

Director Paul R. Patrick, President, NASEMSO
201 Park Washington Court, Falls Church, VA 22046-4527

Sheriff John Aubrey, President, NSA
1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22324-3490

Contacts: Jeffrey S. Cohen, Chief Counsel, APCO
703-599-3518, cohenj@apointl.org

Chief Harlin R. McEwen, Chairman, Communications & Technology Committee, IACP
Communications Advisor, NSA
607-227-1664, chiefhrm@pubsaf.com

Jim Goldstein, Government Relations Manager, IAFC
703-537-4828, jgoldstein@iafc.org

Kevin McGinnis, MOPS, EMT-P, Communications Technology Advisor, NASEMSO
207-512-0975, kmcginnis@nasemso.org