



## NAVAJO TRIBAL UTILITY AUTHORITY

AN ENTERPRISE OF THE NAVAJO NATION

May 17, 2016

Jon Wilkins  
Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 – 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: SAL Spectrum, LLC  
Petition for Waiver

Dear Mr. Wilkins,

As the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority of the Navajo, I write in support of the petition submitted by Atlantic Tele-Network, Inc. (ATN) and its subsidiary SAL Spectrum, LLC (SAL) seeking a waiver to qualify for the rural service provider bidding credit in the upcoming broadcast incentive auction.

Considering that the bidding credit is intended to enhance the deployment of competitive and innovative service offerings to consumers in rural areas, ATN should be afforded the benefit of this bidding credit. In fact, with its proven record of deployment to some of the most remote areas in the Navajo reservation – areas where no other carrier was willing to serve – ATN is the prototype of a company that should benefit from the bidding credit.

NTUA Wireless, LLC (which is owned 51% by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, an enterprise of the Navajo Nation, and 49% by ATN), was the first company to deploy 3G and 4G LTE services to the Navajo Nation Reservation in both Arizona and New Mexico. The LTE project offers fixed and mobile service to over 30,000 households (approximately 135,000 people) and 1,000 businesses in 15 of the largest communities in the Navajo Nation. The LTE deployment was facilitated by the tribal lands bidding credit that ATN and SAL were able to obtain in the 700 MHz spectrum auction.

As a result of ATN's commitment to serve underserved areas, Navajo Nation residents now can access mobile voice and broadband services, which offer our people the chance to keep pace with the rest of the country. ATN's commitment to serve the Navajo Nation has improved the quality of life for countless individuals and is essential to the economic development of our communities, but to fully take advantage of the opportunities offered in an increasingly wireless world, it should have the opportunity to acquire more spectrum on fair terms. As we understand it, the number of

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subscribers served by ATN companies in other countries was not relevant to the Commission in awarding the 700 MHz auction bidding credit. Denying ATN/SAL access to the rural bidding credit in the 600 MHz auction would not only tie their hands in the auction and affect the competitiveness of the auction; it also would deny consumers in rural areas of the benefits we have seen on the Navajo Nation.

There are few places in America more rural than the Navajo Nation, but thanks to NTUA Wireless, Tribal residents in these areas are well on the road to having access to the same wireless capabilities as citizens in the most metropolitan areas in America. We are grateful for the connectivity that NTUA Wireless has provided to us, and Americans living in rural and underserved parts of the country stand to benefit as we have from the efforts of ATN/SAL. It would be a serious mistake for the Commission to deprive citizens in rural America of these same opportunities by denying the waiver request and hindering ATN/SAL's ability to compete in the incentive auction.

For these reasons, the Navajo Nation encourages the Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau to grant the waiver and extend the rural service provider bidding credit to ATN/SAL.

Sincerely,

**NAVAJO TRIBAL UTILITY AUTHORITY**



Walter W. Haase, P.E.  
General Manager

WWH/tt

cc: Chairman Tom Wheeler  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly