

OPPOSITION TO AUCTIONING THE 216-217 MHz SPECIAL EDUCATION BAND
FCC Docket Number 00-221
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COMMENTS OF WILLIAM L. D'AGOSTINO, WB1DMK

I am strongly opposed to the proposal of sale the 216-217 MHz Educational Band. This Educational Band is normally used for Special Educational needs such as for teaching deaf and hearing impaired children! The elimination of this needed Special Educational Band is NOT in the best interest of our nation and would discriminate against the handicap and especially against hearing impaired disabled children!

Specifically, many hearing impaired children are able to participate fully in regular classroom education with the aid of low power FM radio systems utilizing the 216-217 MHz Educational band. These FM radio devices allow the teacher, or other speakers, to talk into a small microphone, which transmits their voice directly to the hearing impaired child's hearing aid. This significantly reduces the impact of poor acoustics and classroom noise. Otherwise, the hearing impaired child would be unable (or severely hindered) to hear what he or she needs.

The Federal government understood the value of this FM radio service and had set aside a part of the radio spectrum at 216-217 MHz for use by these devices.

Unfortunately, the Federal government has forgotten its priorities, and as a part of the deficit reduction program, Congress has directed the Federal Communications Commission to auction parts of the radio spectrum to commercial users. Among the bands currently being considered for auction is 216-217 MHz. I am strongly opposed to the auctioning of the 216-217 MHz Special Educational Band which assists hearing impaired children.

In addition, my nephew is a profoundly deaf child who depends on this 216-217 MHz Special Educational FM Radio Band. At the age of three, he was stricken with meningitis which completely stole his hearing. Through the miracle of technology, my nephew was implanted with a cochlear implant (an electrode implanted into the audio nerve), and now he can "hear" 16-tones which his brain can translate into sound. This system is nothing short of a miracle, however, it can never replace the hearing of a normal child. Because of this significant handicap, my nephew relies on the 216-217 MHz Special Educational FM Band as his elementary school teacher wears a 216-217 MHz FM microphone-transmitter which broadcasts the teacher's speech directly to a 216-217 MHz FM radio receiver which is directly in front of my nephew on his school desk. Without this 216-217 MHz Special Educational FM Band, my nephew would be overwhelmed by the "normal" background classroom noise which would stifle his education because he would be unable to understand his teacher.

My nephew is only one example of the thousands of hearing impaired children who rely on this vital 216-217 MHz Special Educational FM Band!

I strongly urge the FCC not to sell the 216-217 MHz Special Educational FM Band!

Thank you.

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