

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

In the Matter of)
)
Improving Public Safety Communications) WT Docket No. 02-55
in the 800 MHz Band)
)
Consolidating the 900 MHz Industrial/Land)
Transportation and Business Pool Channels)

To: Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

Reply Comments of the Rural Telecommunications Group

The Rural Telecommunications Group (“RTG”)¹ hereby submits these reply comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission’s (“FCC” or “Commission”) January 3, 2003 Public Notice regarding the *Supplemental Comments of the Consensus Parties* in the above-captioned proceeding.² Specifically, RTG is filing these replies with regard to the latest proposal put forth by the “Consensus Parties” in their *Supplemental Comments*.³ As discussed below, certain aspects of the Consensus Parties’ proposal (“Consensus Plan”) may impose

¹ RTG is an organized group of rural telecommunications providers who have joined together to speed the delivery of new, efficient, and innovative telecommunications technologies to the populations of remote and underserved sections of the country. RTG’s members provide wireless telecommunications services such as cellular telephone service and Personal Communications Services (“PCS”) to their subscribers. RTG represents numerous A Band cellular carriers. RTG’s members are affiliated with rural telephone companies or are small businesses serving or seeking to serve secondary, tertiary, and rural markets.

² *In re Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on “Supplemental Comments of the Consensus Parties” Filed in the 800 MHz Public Safety Interference Proceeding*, WT Docket No. 02-55, Public Notice, DA 03-19 (January 3, 2003). *In re Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band, Consolidating the 800 MHz Industrial/Land Transportation and Business Pool Channels*, Order Extending Time for Filing of Comments, WT Docket 02-55, DA 03-163 (January 16, 2003).

³ *In re Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band, Consolidating the 800 MHz Industrial/Land Transportation and Business Pool Channels*, Supplemental Comments of The Consensus Parties, *Ex Parte* Filing, WT Docket No. 02-55 (December 24, 2002).

considerable anticompetitive equipment upgrade costs on A Band cellular carriers, but not upon their competitors such as B Band and PCS carriers, as well as Nextel. The Commission must not allow one sector of the industry to subsidize another competing sector, and must closely examine the effect the Consensus Plan will have on competition.

Since the Consensus Plan was filed on December 24, 2002, Motorola has circulated a letter to many of its clients, including RTG members (See Appendix A), detailing the changes needed to achieve compliance with the Consensus Parties' proposed interference mitigation plan. Motorola estimates that it will need to develop filtering equipment in accordance with the Consensus Plan's technical specifications, and then install and calibrate the filters on each individual cell site. It is RTG's understanding that, based on the cost of existing filters, Motorola's proposed modifications would cost between \$3000 to \$5000 per cell site for current A Band carriers. For one RTG member with 70 cell sites, the filters could end up costing it between \$210,000 and \$350,000 in order to comply with the mitigation requirements of the Consensus Plan.

RTG members have also been in contact with Nortel regarding filtering modifications in light of the Consensus Plan. While Nortel does not have specific cost breakdowns or technical details regarding interference filters at this time, Nortel's initial estimate of the cost for a small, rural carrier with six cell sites is approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 (*i.e.*, approximately \$10,000 per cell site). Further, many rural carriers are located in high cost areas where there will be additional costs associated with engineering each individual cell site. Since the issue has just come to the attention of most A Band cellular carriers, they are still working with their vendors to fully understand the cost ramifications of the Consensus Plan.

While the exact cost of compliance with the Consensus Plan for current A Band carriers is still being determined, *any* such compliance costs that must be borne by small carriers such as RTG members in order to allow a competitor like Nextel to use the 800 MHz band are anticompetitive. With initial compliance cost estimates ranging from at least \$3,000 per cell site, and with the distinct possibility of costs exceeding these estimates since new equipment has to be developed, small carriers will be put at an incredible competitive disadvantage in comparison to a large, nationwide carrier such as Nextel with its vast resources. In essence, small and rural A Band cellular carriers will have to subsidize a potential behemoth competitor like Nextel.⁴ In addition, requiring A band carriers to expend their scarce capital resources on interference filters while their B Band competitors and PCS competitors have no such financial burden will harm A Band carriers' competitive prospects. If these early Motorola and Nortel estimates prove to be accurate, A Band carriers will be unfairly disadvantaged in the commercial mobile radio service ("CMRS") market.

RTG respectfully requests that the Commission examine the scope of the costs that may have to be borne by the current A Band carriers in order to subsidize Nextel's move and other carriers' competitive plans. In addition, RTG requests that the Commission consider a reimbursement mechanism or have Nextel and other carriers foot the bill for the interference

⁴ On February 20, 2003, Nextel reported \$1.66 billion in income available to shareholders.

filters in much the same way that the Commission required PCS carriers to pay the way for the relocation of incumbent microwave carriers.⁵

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS GROUP

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February 25, 2003

⁵ See 47 C.F.R. § 101.69 *et. seq.*

Attachment A

Motorola Inc.

1421 W Shure Drive, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

February 25, 2003

Art Prest
Vice President and CTO
Alpine PCS
10234 Democracy Boulevard
Potomac, MD. 20854

Dear Art:

On March 15, 2002, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that Explores Options and Alternatives for Improving the Spectrum Environment for Public Safety Operations in the 800 MHz Band and Consolidating the 900 MHz Industrial/Land Transportation and Business Pool Channels. WT Docket No. 02-55.

If accepted as written, all parties operating base station transmitters in the range 851-895 MHz would incur additional responsibilities as part of the continued granting of their licenses, and the continued granting of type acceptance for equipment manufacturers. Additionally Out-of-band emissions (OOBE) for base station transmitters in the 861-895 MHz band would be further reduced from the current specification as follows:

- ?? No less than 15 dB at 860.0 MHz,
- ?? No less than 30 dB at 859.5 MHz, and
- ?? No less than 45 dB on all frequencies between 851 and 859 MHz.

As a working partner, Motorola is providing the following technical impact statement to help you understand the impact of these changes on your networks from both a regulatory compliance and performance perspective so you can formulate a position and response if you choose to do so. Comments are due to the FCC by 2/10. Motorola's interpretation of the proposal would have the following impact on currently deployed base stations:

1. All B band cellular carriers would be unaffected by this change. Only A band cellular operators are affected.
2. Those SC4812XXX sites equipped with only the T426AA Dual Bandpass Filter Option would be non compliant, as there is insufficient filter selectivity margin once the proposed rule changes take effect.
3. All sites currently equipped with T426AA Dual Bandpass Filter Options equipped with TRDC/DRDC/2:1 cavity combiner combinations would remain compliant after the proposed rule changes take effect.
4. All SC300 sites equipped with the current domestic IFAs will be non compliant once the new requirements are applied.
5. Legacy SC2450/2400 and HDII/NAMPS Analog and Mixed Mode sites may also be affected by this change.

Required Actions:

SC4812XXX sites

It has been determined by data taken thus far that any combination of DBPF with either a DRDC or TRDC option would provide the required minimum of 18 dB filter selectivity and thus would not be impacted by the proposed changes. Those sites equipped with 2:1 tuned cavity combiners would also be compliant. This would also include 4812T sites equipped with externally mounted DRDCs.

The following retrofits will be required to bring sites falling into category 1 into compliance with the new standards. *Note that all of these options will require a site recalibration and ATP:*

- Replace DBPF with the T654AC 2:1 combiner option
 - o *Note that if the 2 carrier site is using adjacent carriers you will need to replace with 6 of the 2:1 combiners. This would require additional outputs at the top of the frame and may require some antenna reconfiguration either through duplexers or similar equipment.*
- Adding DRDC/TRDC option to the existing TX path lineup.

SC300 sites

It has been determined by data taken thus far that the current SC300 microcell IFA would not provide the required filter selectivity.

- ?? A SC300 equipped with a modified IFA designed to meet the new requirements will have to be installed to replace the current models.
 - o *Note that all ATPs currently required for a new site deployment would be required.*
- ?? The SC300 being replaced can then be retrofitted with the modified IFA at a qualified service facility and returned to service.

SC2450/2400 and HDII/NAMPS sites

- ?? Motorola is currently investigating the regulatory impact to these frame types. Due to the number of possible configurations deployed in the field (with respect to site filter rack equipages, filtering options, and co-location with other cell site equipment) we are unable to provide filter selectivity margin information for these products at this time. Should you require assistance in determining if the proposed ruling would apply to your specific configuration(s), please contact your Motorola account team with this information.

Rest assured that your Motorola Account Team, CNRC, and Engineering organizations are available to assist you should you wish to consult further on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jim Joyce