



## The Utility Spectrum Crisis: A Critical Need to Enable Smart Grids

Utilities Telecom Council

January 2009

Critical service providers, including electric, gas and water utilities, are dependent on expansive, internally built/owned/operated communications infrastructure that cannot be duplicated by public networks. In order for providers of essential services to manage the increasing demands placed on their networks securely and reliably, including smart grid deployment, they must have access to at least 30 MHz of dedicated radio spectrum.

UTC calls on policymakers to give utilities access to spectrum by changing the regulatory environment that has historically resulted, not in an increase in bandwidth for utilities, but in a *net loss* of spectrum available for mission-critical systems, as well as a total lack of spectrum dedicated for their use. This trend must be reversed so that utilities can retain current service levels, let alone expand and modernize their networks and implement smart grid technology.

Our report, *The Utility Spectrum Crisis: A Critical Need to Enable Smart Grids* extensively documents the spectrum needs and potentially damaging spectrum shortfalls utilities face. In particular the report explains how utilities need dedicated spectrum to:

- Ensure more reliable service and faster restoration related to emergencies and natural catastrophes.
- Protect electric utility networks from cyber-based terrorist attacks.
- Implement the advanced technologies that make up the “smart grid,” thereby aiding energy efficiency and vastly superior network reliability.

As first steps to achieving these vital objectives, policymakers should:

- Act to ensure that critical infrastructure industries, as already defined by the FCC, be allocated at least 30 MHz of spectrum to support emergency and dispatch voice communications, smart grid implementation, asset modernization, distributed generation and secure control networks.
- Look to the Canadian allocation of 1800-1830 MHz to support its electric grid and harmonize this in the U.S. for a secure, reliable and “smarter” North American energy infrastructure.
- Urge the FCC to act on a petition (FCC RM-11429) that would give critical infrastructure industries secondary access to additional frequencies as a means of easing spectrum pressure.

For more information on this important matter, contact Jill Lyon, Vice President and General Counsel, UTC at [jill.lyon@utc.org](mailto:jill.lyon@utc.org) or 202-833-6808.