

January 20, 2010

Hon. Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Critical Infrastructure Communications Spectrum Crisis

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The undersigned members of the Critical Infrastructure Communications Council are pleased to hear that the FCC is looking closely at the request by the Utilities Telecom Council and critical infrastructure industries for access to spectrum as part of the FCC's National Broadband Plan. The nation's electric, gas and water utilities and other critical infrastructure industries are experiencing their own spectrum crisis as they attempt to support the national goals for economic recovery, public safety, energy independence and improving the environment. Spectrum will also be a major factor in the successful response to this Administration's call for a smarter, more efficient energy network through deployment of smart grids. We urge the FCC to include the need for non-commercial/industrial, privately built broadband capacity in your planning for the nation's broadband future.

Utilities and other critical infrastructure industries certainly can, and will, use commercial broadband offerings for some of their innovative applications. However, mission-critical control and restoration needs cannot be met this way: commercial networks fail to provide the required coverage, reliability and security outside a handful of major cities. Any claims to the contrary are inaccurate at best, and ignore the potential risk to the most necessary of everyday services. Any spectrum made available for wireless broadband services thus should also include dedicated and/or shared spectrum for utilities' and other critical infrastructure industries' communications, which support the safe, reliable and efficient delivery of essential services to the public at large. Where appropriate, sharing spectrum can use existing allocations more efficiently and support the huge costs of deployment.

We urge the FCC to consider carefully the urgent need for access to spectrum by utilities and critical infrastructure industries. The undersigned members of the Critical Infrastructure Communications Council thank you and the Commission for your consideration in this matter, and welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further over the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,

American Gas Association
American Petroleum Institute
American Public Power Association
Edison Electric Institute
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Utilities Telecom Council