

[Rick Kaplan](#), the FCC's Wireless Bureau Chief, could not have been more correct when he declared his mission at this week's open meeting to be "no MHz left behind." Given the scarcity of available spectrum – and the challenges the FCC is facing trying to free up new spectrum for mobile Internet use – ensuring that all licensed spectrum is fully and efficiently deployable is essential. Public interest groups and individuals supporting interoperability have rightfully brought up the issue of there being two existing band classes in the lower 700 MHz bands (Lower A & B blocks) and suggested that the FCC should consider requiring a single band class. No doubt AT&T and Verizon want to prevent interoperability. They would prefer to make their own networks incompatible with each other's and other competitors. Want to buy the latest Apple iPad and use it on a 4G LTE network well there are different models built for AT&T and Verizon's network. If you buy a 4G LTE iPad for use with Verizon Wireless but later want to use AT&T you have to buy a new iPad built for AT&T's network. You cannot use your existing iPad with AT&T's network.

In a recent blog post about the FCC's interoperability proceeding AT&T criticizes any suggestion of requiring one band class be used suggesting two band classes were made because of significant interference challenges that led the [3GPP standards-setting body](#) to create two band classes in the first place. AT&T then says contrary to what some other carriers claim the existence of two band classes is not to blame for the lack of Lower A Block deployment (and their partly right the existence of 2 band classes might not be entirely responsible for this problem but could be somewhat responsible; however AT&T dismisses the notion that the existence of 2 band classes are to blame even somewhat for the problem) while mentioning Band 12 chips are available. The fact that for the first time AT&T and Verizon are both using similar technology for their 4G networks which should make them compatible with each other should guarantee interoperability between AT&T and Verizon Wireless devices. However, there are still interoperability problems some exist because these companies don't want interoperability with their networks or other carrier's networks. Right now AT&T Mobility and Verizon Wireless are both using 4G LTE, meanwhile Sprint Nextel is using Wi-Max technology for its 4G network but is transitioning to 4G LTE and T-Mobile USA using HSPA+ technology for its 4G network plans to began rolling out a 4G LTE network in 2013. At the very least AT&T and Verizon's wireless networks should be compatible with each other even as other carriers use incompatible technologies like WiMax and HSPA+ for their networks and once these carriers have successfully migrated to LTE there should be complete interoperability among the carriers.