



PUBLIC NOTICE

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THE SPACE BUREAU, THE WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU, THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND THE OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY SEEK INFORMATION ON SHARING IN THE 18 GHz BAND IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL SPECTRUM STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GN Docket No. 24-248

Comment Date: September 5, 2024

Reply Comment Date: September 16, 2024

With this *Public Notice*, the Space and Wireless Telecommunications Bureaus, the Office of International Affairs, and the Office of Engineering and Technology seek to further develop the record for the 18.1–18.6 GHz band (18 GHz band) with the goal of informing the forthcoming report mandated by the National Spectrum Strategy (NSS) Implementation Plan. The NSS identified the 18 GHz band as a potential band for expanded Federal and non-Federal satellite operations, consistent with the U.S. position at the 2023 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-23), which would add space-to-space allocations to this band (among others).¹ Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) downlink operations are currently authorized in the band. In addition, non-Federal Fixed Service is authorized in the 18.1–18.3 GHz segment of the band.² The final report with findings is to be completed by May 2025.³

Background. In 2006, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) released the Report and Order rechannelizing the 17.7–19.7 GHz band for Fixed Microwave Services under part 101 of the Commission’s Rules (18 GHz R&O).⁴ As part of the 18 GHz R&O, the Commission adopted a revised band plan for the 17.7–18.3 and 19.3–19.7 GHz band, designated a contiguous 600 megahertz block of one way spectrum from 17.7–18.3 GHz for use by multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs), and protected certain federal earth stations in the FSS (space-to-Earth) in the 17.7–17.8 GHz band.⁵ United States federal systems are authorized to operate in the 17.8–20.2 GHz band in accordance

¹ National Telecommunications and Information Administration, National Spectrum Strategy at 7 (2023), https://www.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/publications/national_spectrum_strategy_final.pdf (NSS). See also, World Radio Communication Conference (WRC-23) Final Acts, https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-r/opb/act/R-ACT-WRC.16-2024-PDF-E.pdf at 141 (Note: WRC-23 added space-to-space allocations to the 18GHz band).

² NSS at 3, 6-7. National Telecommunications and Information Administration, National Spectrum Strategy Implementation Plan at 6 (2024), <https://www.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/publications/national-spectrum-strategy-implementation-plan.pdf> (NSS Implementation Plan).

³ NSS Implementation Plan at A-11.

⁴ *In the Matter of Rechannelization of the 17.7-19.7 GHz Frequency Band for Fixed Microwave Services under Part 101 of the Commission’s Rules*, WT Docket No. 04-143, Report and Order 21 FCC Rcd 10900 (2006).

⁵ *See id.*

with footnote US334 in the United States Table of Frequency Allocations.⁶ Coordination between non-federal operations, both terrestrial and satellite, and these federal operations remain in effect.

WRC-23 and 18 GHz. Under Agenda Item 1.17 of WRC-23, the Conference considered appropriate regulatory actions for the provision of inter-satellite links in the frequency bands 11.7–12.7 GHz, 18.1–18.6 GHz, 18.8–20.2 GHz and 27.5–30.0 GHz. During the ITU-R study cycle leading up to the Conference, the United States and other administrations developed extensive sharing and compatibility studies to assess the feasibility of introducing satellite-to-satellite links in the 18 GHz band, among others. Based on these studies, at WRC-23 the United States and other member states of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) supported a common regional proposal to add an inter-satellite service allocation in bands including the 18 GHz band, under certain conditions.⁷ WRC-23 ultimately adopted inter-satellite service allocations in the 18 GHz and other bands in the International Table of Frequency Allocations subject to a new Resolution and additional restrictions.⁸

WRC-15 NPRM and 18.142–18.3 GHz. In April 2023, the Commission sought comment on whether it should raise the non-Federal secondary FSS (space-to-Earth) allocation in the 18.142–18.3 GHz band to primary status, i.e., co-equal with the non-Federal primary fixed service allocation in the band.⁹ If adopted, this upgrade of allocation status would provide receiving earth stations with interference protection from later-licensed fixed stations that are used for part 74 and part 101 Multichannel Video Programming Distributor (MVPD) and part 78 cable television relay service (CARS) operations that operate in accordance with the proposed rules in this section.¹⁰

National Spectrum Strategy. The NSS identifies the 18 GHz band as a band for further study.¹¹ The NSS Implementation Plan establishes a schedule under which a band study would be completed by February 2025 and a final report issued by May 2025.¹² In order to aid the band study and report preparation, we seek public input on various issues relating to current or potential uses of the 18 GHz Band. Specifically, we seek comment on whether the assumptions and analysis on which the WRC-23 decision was based are still valid. Commenters advocating that the NSS band study should be based on different assumptions or analysis should provide detailed technical information describing why they disagree with the previous work and what assumptions they favor and their preferred analysis method. We also seek comment on the use cases operators in the 18 GHz band plan to support and what regulatory changes are needed to implement any allocation changes supported by the record. In addition, we seek comment on whether the separately pending proposal to elevate the non-Federal FSS allocation in the 18.142–18.3 GHz band to primary status would affect a new space allocation in the 18 GHz band. The record developed in response to this *Public Notice* will be publicly available in GN Docket No. 24-248 and shared with the NTIA and other interested agencies.

Filing Requirements. Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates

⁶ 47 CFR § 2.106(c)(334).

⁷ Member States of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), Proposals for the Work of the Conference, Agenda Item 1.17, https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-r/md/23/wrc23/c/R23-WRC23-C-0044!A17!MSW-E.docx.

⁸ See World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23), Final Acts, https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-r/opb/act/R-ACT-WRC.16-2024-PDF-E.pdf.

⁹ *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Implementation of the Final Acts of the World Radiocommunication Conference (Geneva, 2015) (WRC-15), Other Allocation Issues, and Related Rule Updates*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, ET Docket No. 23-120, 38 FCC Rcd 3528, 3545, para. 38 (2023).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ NSS at 7.

¹² NSS Implementation Plan at A-11.

indicated on the first page of this document. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS).

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing.
- Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial courier, or by the U.S. Postal Service. **All filings must be addressed to the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.**
- Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by the FCC's mailing contractor at 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes and boxes must be disposed of before entering the building.
- Commercial courier deliveries (any deliveries not by the U.S. Postal Service) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
- Filings sent by U.S. Postal Service First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express must be sent to 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.

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Additional Information. For further information regarding this Public Notice, please contact Bahman Badipour, Office of Engineering and Technology, at 202-418-7814 or bahman.badipour@fcc.gov.