



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2004

News Media Contact
Lauren M. Van Wazer
(202)418-0030

FCC BEGINS RULEMAKING PROPOSING TO ALLOW WIRELESS BROADBAND OPERATIONS IN THE 3650-3700 MHz BAND

Washington, D.C. – Seeking to facilitate the provision of broadband access to American consumers, especially in rural areas, the FCC today initiated a proceeding to foster the introduction of wireless broadband operations in the 3650-3700 MHz band ("3650 MHz band"). In response to requests by wireless internet service providers (WISPs), the FCC proposed to allow unlicensed devices to operate in some or all of the 3650 MHz band with higher power than currently authorized under Part 15 of the Rules, subject to cognitive technology safeguards. The FCC also sought comment on options that would allow for licensed operations in this band, or for segmenting the band between licensed and unlicensed uses.

WISPs, among others, have been asking the Commission for additional spectrum for higher power unlicensed devices in order to more economically provide backhaul links to internet gateways as well as broadband access networks serving individual customers in sparsely populated areas. Because the 50 megahertz block of spectrum in the 3650 MHz band falls midway between the existing 2.4 GHz and 5.8 GHz bands now in use for unlicensed Wi-Fi devices, and because the fixed satellite service (FSS) earth stations that currently occupy the 3650 MHz band are located primarily on the east and west coasts, this spectrum appears to be a natural fit for service expansion, especially in rural areas.

Under the central proposal of this Notice, unlicensed devices would be allowed to operate in all, or part, of the 3650 MHz band at higher power levels than usually permitted for unlicensed services, which should enhance the utility of unlicensed devices and services in rural areas. These devices also would be subject to smart (or cognitive) requirements and other safeguards designed to prevent interference to the licensed FSS earth stations now resident in the band. Fixed unlicensed devices, for example, would be subject to a professional installation requirement and would be prohibited from being located with a defined protection zone surrounding each FSS earth station. Non-fixed, unlicensed devices would be subject to "listen-before-talk" requirements that would detect the presence of any FSS earth station in the vicinity, and make an appropriate decision of whether to transmit and to make appropriate adjustments to the transmit power. Unlicensed devices would also be required to emit a standardized identification signal which would possibly provide contact information, as well as location. That signal would allow easy identification of possible sources if interference arises. As with other

unlicensed devices, these devices would not be permitted to cause interference to licensed services, such as the FSS earth stations, and would have to accept interference.

The Notice also seeks comment on other options, including licensed use of the band by fixed and mobile services, or segmenting the 3650 MHz band to provide for a combination of unlicensed and licensed terrestrial services. Licensed terrestrial services, if authorized, could employ cognitive technologies similar, if not identical, to those proposed for unlicensed applications in order to avoid interference to existing FSS earth stations. The Notice seeks comment on issues related both to allocation changes necessary to set the relative priority between terrestrial and FSS licensed operations, and to licensing rule changes necessary to implement licensed terrestrial service operations. For example, the Notice seeks comment on various licensing approaches, such as geographic licensing, site-by-site licensing, and band manager approaches.

Action by the Commission, April 15, 2004, by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 04-100).

ET Docket Nos. 04-151, 02-380, and 98-237

-FCC-

Office of Engineering and Technology Contact: Neal McNeil (202) 418-2408, Gary Thayer (202) 418-2290.