

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Review of the Commission's Rules	)	WT Docket No. 24-99
Governing the 896-901/935-940 MHz Band	)	RM-11977

To: The Commission

**COMMENTS  
OF THE  
ENTERPRISE WIRELESS ALLIANCE**

The Enterprise Wireless Alliance (“EWA”) has been an active proponent of the reconfiguration of the 896-901/935-940 MHz band (“900 MHz Band”) to provide a licensed broadband option for enterprise entities since the original Petition for Rulemaking was filed in 2014.<sup>1</sup> It endorsed the decision of the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) to authorize a 3/3 megahertz broadband segment in 2020.<sup>2</sup> It joined nine entities in filing a Petition for Rulemaking<sup>3</sup> to create a 5/5 megahertz broadband option in the 900 MHz Band, conditioned on a voluntary relocation process and appropriate protection of incumbent licensees. It filed Comments and Reply Comments in support of the 2020 Petition.<sup>4</sup> It is pleased that the record in response to that Petition was sufficiently favorable that the Commission was able to adopt this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking<sup>5</sup> promptly and with rules generally consistent with those proposed by the Petitioners. The record on the Petition suggests that the filings at this stage of the proceeding will support an equally prompt adoption of a Report and Order that will “unlock the full potential of broadband in the [900 MHz Band]...”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Petition for Rulemaking of the Enterprise Wireless Alliance and Pacific DataVision, Inc., RM-11738 (filed Nov. 17, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> *Review of the Commission's Rules Governing the 896-901/935-940 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 17-200, Report and Order, Order of Proposed Modification, and Orders, 35 FCC Rcd 5183 (2020) (“R&O”).

<sup>3</sup> Petition of Ameren Services Company, et al., for Rulemaking, RM-11977 (filed Feb. 28, 2024) (“Petition”). The petitioners were Ameren Services Company; Anterix, Inc.; Enterprise Wireless Alliance (“EWA”); Evergy, Inc.; Lower Colorado River Authority; Portland General Electric; San Diego Gas & Electric; Southern Communications Services, Inc.; Utility Broadband Alliance; and Xcel Energy Services, Inc. (“Petitioners”).

<sup>4</sup> See *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on Petition for Rulemaking to Expand Wireless Broadband in 900 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 24-99, Public Notice, DA 24-320 (rel. Apr. 2, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order*, WT Docket No. 24-99, FCC 25-8 (rel. Jan. 16, 2025) (“NPRM”).

<sup>6</sup> NPRM at ¶ 1.

The NPRM is correct in its assessment of the potential of this expanded broadband option:

We believe this to be an important step toward ensuring the band is efficiently and intensively utilized and that the increasing spectrum capacity and private broadband network needs of industries, such as utilities, railroads, critical infrastructure, and business enterprises, are met.<sup>7</sup>

While electric utilities are the first enterprise industry segment to invest in broadband deployments in the 900 MHz Band, others will follow as the capabilities of broadband technology to provide enhanced latency, capacity, reliability, and security become increasingly well-known.

As explained in its Comments on the Petition, EWA has represented the wireless interests of enterprise entities for decades. It has consistently supported industry and FCC initiatives that provide opportunities for deploying more advanced technologies and maximizing the use of the relatively limited spectrum resources allocated for this segment of the wireless community. It has emphasized the sometimes not well-recognized importance of their wireless systems for the day-to-day functioning of the economy and the well-being of the American public.

The 3/3 megahertz broadband segment has already allowed a number of electric utilities to deploy systems that they can design, install, and operate on their own schedules and tailor to their critical operations and large service areas. While they have great concern about the ever-growing threat of cyber-security assaults on their operations, that concern is shared by many enterprise entities such as those in the airline, financial, transportation, and manufacturing industries. EWA anticipates they too will install internal broadband systems that are not tied to the internet and that meet their highly specialized requirements. The superiority of broadband technology in protecting against manmade and environmental threats, as well as the increased capacity and reduced latency it offers is expected to make broadband capability an integral component of their wireless operations.

The expanding universe of enterprise entities that need access to licensed broadband spectrum makes adoption of the 5/5 megahertz broadband option all the more critical. EWA explained in its Reply Comments on the Petition that this greater capacity could allow private entities to share broadband networks, thereby reducing their costs while also ensuring intensive use of spectrum. It believes the proposed 5/5 megahertz broadband authorization will become a

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

compelling option for a growing number of private enterprise entities as the capabilities of this technology become even better known.

It is for this reason that EWA joined in filing the 2024 Petition for Rulemaking whose record prompted the adoption of this NPRM. It did so after concluding that the option to expand the broadband segment to a 5/5 megahertz allocation could be implemented while protecting the operations of incumbents that wish to maintain narrowband systems in the current narrowband allocations. A core feature of the Petition and of the NPRM is the entirely voluntary exchange process for relocating incumbents out of those band segments, an element viewed as essential for a number of commenters.<sup>8</sup> The NPRM describes the proposed process as follows:

...a 5/5 broadband applicant must negotiate a full, voluntary clearing or protection of all incumbents in the current 900 MHz narrowband segments. We emphasize that we are not proposing to authorize a mandatory relocation process for the current narrowband segment (e.g., the 896-897.5/935-936.5 and 900.5-901/939.5-940 MHz bands)...<sup>9</sup>

The NPRM does request comment on whether additional deployment obligations or a description of future deployment plans should be required from incumbents that decline to relocate voluntarily.<sup>10</sup> EWA does not believe such requirements would be appropriate. If relocation is to be truly voluntary, incumbents should not be subject to what are effectively retroactive obligations. However, EWA is committed to ensuring that licensees in all bands utilize the spectrum for which they are authorized. If channels or sites or entire authorizations should have been canceled in accordance with the discontinuance rules set out in FCC Rule Section 1.953, those discontinued facilities should not be an obstacle to an expanded 5/5 megahertz license, and the FCC has authority to require certification of continued operation.

Finally, EWA appreciates that interests must be balanced when considering the 900 MHz freeze, or the freezes the FCC adopts for any band that is going through a reconfiguration process. It stated in its Reply Comments on the Petition that technology transitions require a stable spectrum environment and that there must be provisions to protect against licensing by speculators that hope to acquire licenses for the purpose of being paid to relinquish them. Given those considerations, EWA proposed a further modification of the freeze that would offer an option for incumbents with

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<sup>8</sup> NPRM at n. 89.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at ¶ 25.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at ¶ 26.

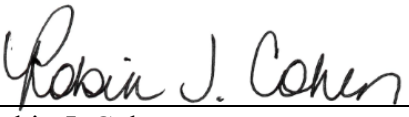
a legitimate need for additional capacity or coverage. It continues to believe the following recommendations would achieve an appropriate balancing of those competing interests:

- Industrial/Business Pool (“I/B”) incumbent licensees may apply for available channels in the Narrowband Segments to increase the spectral and/or geographic footprint of an authorized system in an area not to extend beyond the counties adjacent to their existing fixed locations (“Incumbent Expansion”) once the 3/3 megahertz clearing process has been completed in the county(s) in which expansion is requested. The incumbent system must have an active call sign under the same FCC Registration Number (“FRN”) on the application.
- Completion means, on a county-by-county basis, there are no incumbent licenses on channels in the 3/3 megahertz broadband segment (“Completion”). It does not require an application for or the issuance of a broadband license for the county(s).
- EWA will work with the FCC and Anterix to develop a process by which the date of Completion is reported to the FCC, which will make that information available to the public and to 900 MHz Frequency Advisory Committees by Public Notice.
- The freeze should remain in effect vis-à-vis non-I/B applicants that are not eligible for Narrowband Segment channels pursuant to FCC Rule Section 90.616(a)(1) and for I/B applications that do not qualify as Incumbent Expansions.

EWA is pleased that the NPRM closely tracks the proposals and the proposed rules in the Petition. The essentially unanimous record support for that approach to authorizing a 5/5 megahertz broadband option in the 900 MHz Band should enable the FCC to proceed with pace and with confidence in adopting rules consistent with those proposed in the NPRM.

Respectfully submitted,

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