

Northrop Grumman Supports the Reallocation of the 700 MHz D Block Spectrum to Public Safety

The role of first responders has changed dramatically since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and yet very little progress has been made toward placing advanced mobile technology into the hands of the nation's emergency services personnel. Public safety applications and technologies are advancing rapidly, and yet the ability to apply this technology to a highly mobile workforce has been hampered by the lack of spectrum in which to build a nationwide network. The need for spectrum has never been greater for data, voice and incident video for the short term and the future. Sufficient spectrum needs to be allocated to allow for manufacturers to develop secure wireless systems that will not be obsolete before they are fully deployed.

Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have a unique opportunity to provide public safety with the right amount of spectrum to foster development of new technologies to enhance the safety of our first responders and provide them with the tools to carry out their mission effectively and efficiently. Northrop Grumman supports the reallocation of the D Block to public safety and the establishment of regulatory process and structure that will allow fully interoperable networks to be constructed by regions, states and government entities that will commit to building and managing such systems. We support the public safety coalition's efforts to request Congressional action to reallocate the D Block to public safety creating spectrum foundation for the future.

Northrop Grumman further supports the licensing of the full 20 MHz of spectrum to individual entities that are capable of implementing and managing the network as a sub-licensee to the already established Public Safety Spectrum Trust. The FCC should adopt regulatory policy that enables early deployment of secure broadband networks provided the managing agency conforms to the national standards allowing full compatibility with devices and interoperability with supporting agencies. The regulatory structure of the nationwide network must be flexible enough to allow for public/private partnerships where practical, and options that allow first responders to have access to a broadband network built to public safety standards for reliability and redundancy. Additionally the region or entity constructing the network should have the option to include other governmental users as practical to take advantage of the networks' capabilities. The widely adopted Long Term Evolution (LTE) standard includes priority access and a quality of service (QoS) hierarchy that will ensure that public safety standards for access are met.

The federal government also needs to identify funding sources to enable the construction and management of the nationwide network, and the adoption and compliance of a national standard for interoperability. We also support the establishment of a governing body that maintains and

manages the interoperability components of the network such as authentication and priority access to ensure that the true purpose of the network is upheld. The rules must permit the participation of both federal and local public safety first responders, public service / governmental agencies, and critical infrastructure partners to allow for true interoperability and cost sharing among high priority and low priority users.

Northrop Grumman stands with the public safety community in asking Congress to immediately begin identifying funding mechanisms to ensure that construction of the nationwide network is commenced as soon as practicable. As the country focuses on strengthening the economy and securing our nation from further attacks we need to place emphasis on improving the capabilities of our first responders through technology. The Administration has a unique opportunity to set a precedent for public safety by allocating the right amount of spectrum for the near term and the future of public safety communications.

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