

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 7, 2013

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

As demand for mobile broadband continues to skyrocket, the need for a competitive wireless market has never been greater. The wireless industry has provided enormous economic and social benefits to our country but in order to ensure continued growth, innovation, rural deployment and robust competition, we believe interoperability in the lower 700 MHz band is fundamental.

In the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) most recent Wireless Competition Report, it states, "Promoting competition is a fundamental goal of the Commission's policymaking. Competition has played and must continue to play an essential role in the mobile wireless industry – leading to lower prices and higher quality for American consumers, and producing new waves of innovation and investment in wireless networks, devices, and services."¹ We fully agree with this statement, and fear that without device interoperability, these goals cannot be attained.

Establishing technical harmonization in the lower 700 MHz band will have economic, public safety, and consumer benefits. Interoperability would promote economies of scale and scope by enabling a robust device market serving all lower 700 MHz licensees. Consumers in all areas -- including rural America -- would benefit with greater choice of high-quality mobile devices at affordable prices. A single lower 700 MHz band with nationwide scope would benefit all customers because it would enable consumers to use the same devices across multiple carrier platforms as well as roam to and from networks inside and outside of the 700 MHz band.

Furthermore, for public safety, a reduction in the number of separate bands in the lower 700 MHz would increase opportunities to roam on multiple commercial networks. FirstNet, the independent authority tasked by Congress with establishing a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network, would have more carriers that could provide service to public safety which would add value, reduce costs, and create more redundancy options for public safety broadband capabilities. The Congressional Research Service observed that "coordinating development of 700 MHz band standards among network participants provides an opportunity to maximize the benefits inherent in IP-enabled networks for the safety of the general public."² Interoperability in the lower 700 MHz band accomplishes this goal.

¹ FCC Mobile Wireless Competition Report (15th Annual), Adopted June 24, 2011.

² L. Moore, *The First Responder Network and Next-Generation Communications for Public Safety: Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service (November 26, 2012).

As build-out of 4G LTE mobile broadband networks continues, the Commission should move quickly to ensure interoperability in the lower 700 MHz band. This will provide for a healthier wireless market to the benefit of all consumers, and will lower costs and increase access to wireless broadband services for public safety.

Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Communications and Technology Subcommittee
Energy and Commerce Committee



Edward J. Markey
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee



Michael F. Doyle
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee



Doris O. Matsui
Member
Energy and Commerce Committee

cc: Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai