

Spectrum Resources: Government Management & Oversight – FCC, NTIA, and International



FCC – The FCC has been aggressive in examining spectrum to facilitate the wireless industry’s move to 5G wireless. Spectrum bands that they are currently looking at include:

- Mid-band spectrum
 - 3.5 GHz CBRS band – a band which will be shared between incumbent, priority access licensees, and unlicensed with incumbents having priority use of the band followed by PALs then GAA
 - 3.7-4.2 GHz C Band
 - 6 GHz band for unlicensed use
- Millimeter wave bands including setting for auction the 28 GHz band followed by the 24 GHz band. The FCC is planning to auction the 37-40 GHz band and the 47 GHz band simultaneously in the second half of 2019. Other bands such as the 42 GHz band are also under consideration for reallocation to mobile services.

NTIA – as part of the Department of Commerce, NTIA manages the Federal Government’s use of spectrum and plays an important role in spectrum allocations, determining whether spectrum can be reallocated from Government use or shared with commercial users. The NTIA has stated that they are looking at possible reallocation of the 3450-3550 MHz band. Other bands are also under consideration as a result of the RAY BAUM’S Act.

World Radio Conference through the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) - The World Radio Conference (WRC), which meets every 3-4 years, updates the International Radio Regulations and works towards harmonizing spectrum allocations across the globe to provide for economies of scale, roaming, and interoperability.

Work is well underway for the next WRC in 2019. Identification of bands for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) 2020 are agenda items of particular interest. Many of the bands being looked at coincide with the bands the FCC is looking at for reallocation.

Spectrum relates to the radio frequencies allocated to the mobile industry and other sectors for communication over the airwaves. These invisible airwaves fuel the mobile internet that offers new economic and social opportunity, on-the-go connectivity that expands access to healthcare, enhanced education by connecting the classroom to the world

outside its walls, boosts energy efficiency, and delivers powerful new tools to first responders.

Because the mobile industry has demonstrated — time and time again — its potential to generate economic value and social benefit, operators are urging national regulators to release sufficient, affordable spectrum in a timely manner for mobile. Additional spectrum, including both coverage and capacity bands, means mobile operators can give consumers the high-quality broadband experience they expect with fast downloads, steady connections, and uninterrupted phone calls.

