

What's New in Wireless - June 2025

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The wireless industry has revolutionized the way we connect, from facilitating teleworking, distance learning, and telemedicine to allowing the American public to interact virtually in almost all other aspects of their daily lives. Leading policymakers – federal regulators and legislators – are making it a top priority to ensure that the wireless industry has the tools and resources it needs to keep pace with this evolving landscape. This blog provides monthly updates on actions by federal regulatory bodies responsible for communications policy and Congressional efforts to support wireless connectivity. And this month we highlight the recent actions taken by the FCC to evaluate EchoStar Corporation's use of its spectrum licenses to provide commercial wireless services.

Regulatory Actions and Initiatives

Spectrum

The FCC Initiates Inquiries on EchoStar's Licenses. On May 12, 2025, the FCC's Space Bureau issued a [Public Notice](#) seeking comment on EchoStar Corporation's ("EchoStar") use of its licenses to operate in the 2 GHz (2000-2020/2180-2200 MHz) band. EchoStar, through its acquisition of DISH, is authorized to provide Mobile-Satellite Service ("MSS") and Advanced Wireless Service ("AWS-4") in the 2 GHz band. But, as the Public Notice observes, "questions have been raised about whether the 2 GHz band is being used for MSS." On that same day, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau ("WTB") released a [Public Notice](#) seeking additional comment on a [Petition](#) filed by VTel Wireless, Inc. ("VTel"), which asks the WTB to reconsider its decision to grant EchoStar an extension of its deadlines to construct certain of its licenses for commercial wireless services, including licenses for AWS-4, Lower 700 MHz E Block, 600 MHz, AWS-3, and AWS H Block spectrum. The deadlines for submitting comments and reply comments on both Public Notices are May 27 and June 6, respectively. INCOMPAS filed a [Motion](#) requesting a 30-day extension of the comment deadline from May 27 to June 26, and the reply comment deadline from June 6 to July 7, for both proceedings. However, the Space Bureau and WTB released an [Order](#) on May 22, 2025, denying the request, finding that an extension of time is not necessary to develop a fulsome record and that there is nothing sufficiently unique or unusual in the proceedings that would warrant extension of the comment and reply comment deadlines.

The FCC Adopts its Proposals to Make 12.7 GHz and 42 GHz Spectrum Available for Satellite Communications to Supplement or Complement Wireless Services. As we previously [reported](#), the FCC considered at its May open meeting a [Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) ("FNPRM") that would seek comment on ways for the 12.7-13.25 GHz ("12.7 GHz") and the 42-42.5 GHz ("42 GHz") bands to be used more intensively for satellite communications, as an alternative, or complement, to terrestrial wireless use in both bands. On May 22, 2025, all FCC Commissioners unanimously adopted the FNPRM, emphasizing the value that the additional spectrum will generate. The FCC also issued a [News Release](#) highlighting that this proceeding "could unlock more than 20,000 megahertz of spectrum for high-speed internet delivered from space." With respect to changes from the draft to the final adopted version of the FNPRM, the final FNPRM, in response to requests by [SpaceX](#) and [Kuiper](#), now also seeks comment on the 51.4-52.4 GHz band and the W-band at 92-94 GHz, 94.1-100 GHz, 102-109.5 GHz, and 111.8-114.25 GHz. The FNPRM also seeks comment on lifting the existing freeze for both earth and space station applications in the 12.7 GHz band. Comments and reply comments will be due 30 days and 60 days, respectively, after the FNPRM is published in the Federal Register.

The FCC Grants the C-band Clearinghouse's Request to Wind Down Operations. On June 4, 2025, the WTB released an [Order](#) granting the C-band Relocation Payment Clearinghouse's [request](#) to wind down and cease operations on or about June 30, 2025. The Clearinghouse was tasked with administering the cost-related aspects of transitioning the 3.7-4.2 GHz band, known as the C-band, from satellite use to commercial wireless services. In granting the request, the WTB found that the Clearinghouse has completed all substantive functions and directed the Clearinghouse to submit a written certification to the WTB upon completion of all outstanding administrative functions. The WTB previously released a [Public Notice](#) on May 14, 2025, seeking comment on the C-band Relocation Payment Clearinghouse's request, and comments were due May 29, 2025.

Wireless Networks, Equipment, and Infrastructure

The FCC Adopts its Rules and Proposals to Strengthen the Security of its Equipment Authorization Program. In addition to the 12.7 GHz and 42 GHz FNPRM discussed above, the FCC unanimously adopted a **Report and Order and FNPRM** on securing its equipment authorization program, with essentially no substantive changes from the earlier circulated draft. As we previously **reported**, the Report and Order, among other things, prohibits Telecommunication Certification Bodies (“TCBs”), test labs, and laboratory accreditation bodies from participating in the FCC’s equipment authorization program if they are owned, controlled, or directed by foreign adversaries and other entities deemed to pose a risk to national security. The FNPRM seeks comment on whether to extend the prohibitions adopted in the Report and Order to include TCBs, test labs, and lab accreditation bodies operating within the jurisdiction of a foreign adversary and consider adding entities from several additional lists maintained by other federal agencies to the definition of a “prohibited entity.” In a **News Release** issued about the item, the FCC touted that “[t]he rules will ensure that the hundreds of equipment test labs and telecommunication certification bodies – entities that test, review, and certify wireless electronic devices for importation, marketing, and sale in the U.S. – do not have ownership interests that present national security risks, including the risk that they would do the bidding of a foreign adversary.” Comments and reply comments on the FNPRM will be due 30 days and 60 days, respectively, after it is published in the Federal Register.

The FCC Denies China Unicom’s Request for Reconsideration of Designation on the Covered List. On May 28, 2025, the FCC’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (“PSHSB”) **denied** a **Petition** filed by China Unicom (Americas) Operations Limited (“CUA”), which requested that the PSHSB reconsider its decision to place CUA’s international telecommunications services on the FCC’s **Covered List** of equipment and services that have been deemed to pose a national security risk. The PSHSB determined that it was required to place CUA’s international telecommunications services on the Covered List pursuant to the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 because an enumerated source in the Act determined that CUA’s services pose a national security risk.

The FCC Reminds Rip-and-Replace Support Recipients About Their Quarterly Status Update Deadline. On June 2, 2025, the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau released a **Public Notice** reminding all rip-and-replace support recipients of their obligation to file a status update with the FCC by July 2, 2025. Support recipients are under the continuing obligation to file status updates every 90 days until they file their final certification.

NTIA Announces the Receipt of Applications for Awards to Support Open RAN. On May 8, 2025, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) **announced** that it received 94 applications requesting nearly \$3 billion in federal funding (and proposing more than \$1.3 billion in private investment) under the third round of funding from the Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund. This third round of funding will make available up to \$450 million to support software-focused Open RAN solutions. NTIA noted that it will evaluate these applications and anticipates making awards “later this year.”

Legislative Efforts

The House Passes, and the Senate Releases, Budget Reconciliation Bills That Would Restore the FCC’s Auction Authority. On May 22, 2025, the House passed the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act**, which would, among other things, restore the FCC’s auction authority through September 30, 2034, require the federal government, within two years of enactment, to identify at least 600 megahertz of spectrum for exclusive, licensed use, and auction such spectrum within three years of enactment. The bill is now in the Senate. The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee released its **budget reconciliation bill** on June 5, 2025, which would also restore the FCC’s auction authority through September 30, 2034, but would require the FCC to auction 800 megahertz of spectrum from the 1.3-10.5 GHz bands, excluding the 3.1-3.45 GHz and 7.4-8.4 GHz bands, within eight years of enactment.

Authors

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Angela Y. Kung draws on significant knowledge of the wireless regulatory landscape and experience at the FCC to advise clients on FCC rules and procedures. With particular expertise on spectrum use policies and auction procedures, she has shepherded Mintz's clients through several FCC auctions related to next-generation 5G wireless technologies and routinely advocates on behalf of clients to help ensure that the agency's rules align with their interests.



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