UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Brendan Carr
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

RE: NTIA Identification of 1675-1680 MHz for One Big Beautiful Bill Spectrum Auction

Dear Chairman Carr:

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is pleased to announce the 1675-1680 MHz band as the first of 500 megahertz of spectrum required to be identified for reallocation to non-Federal use, shared Federal and non-Federal use, or a combination thereof under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.[1] This letter serves as our formal notification of its commercial identification.

Used to support the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), this 1675-1680 MHz band initially was selected for study to further mandates in the Spectrum Pipeline Act of 2015 and has been subject to intensive study since then to consider the feasibility of shared use with nationwide commercial wireless operators.[2] This band partially is used by NOAA GEO satellites to transmit weather, hydrologic and other environmental conditions, and solar activity to a broad range of users in the Federal government, state and local agencies, and the private sector.

Our findings support the feasibility of sharing the band with typical commercial wireless deployments, subject to the conditions described herein. However, since launching this study almost ten years ago, the wireless marketplace has evolved, and new services like direct-to-device (D2D) satellite services also increasingly need more spectrum. Given the characteristics

[1] One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Pub. L. No. 119-21, Section 40002(c) (2025), www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1/text.

[2] Spectrum Pipeline Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-74, Sections 1001-1008, at Section 1004(b), 129 Stat. 621, 621-30 (2015), www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1314/text; *see also* Spectrum Pipeline Reallocation Engineering Study – Follow-on Report, Task 3, NTIA Report 24-01 (Dec. 2024) (NTIA SPRES-FO Report), www.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/ntia_report_24-01_12-2024.pdf; Spectrum Pipeline Reallocation Engineering Study Follow-On Final Report, U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (2024) (Commerce SPRES-FO Final Report), www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1122068936842; Spectrum Pipeline Reallocation 1675–1680 MHz Engineering Study (SPRES) Program Report, U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (2022), www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10906163747708.

of this band, NTIA will engage in further study to additionally consider this band as a candidate to provide additional spectrum for D2D.

Protection of Certain Sites. Modest protections for a small number of Federal satellite downlink sites would be required to allow for sharing the band with new non-Federal wireless operations. These protected sites would ensure the collection of critical data provided by the NESDIS satellites. The NTIA SPRES-FO Report identified four sites that warrant protection:[3]

TABLE 1: PROTECTED FEDERAL SITES

City	State	Latitude	Longitude
Fairmont	WV	39.4336	-80.1928
Sioux Falls	SD	43.7351	-96.6255
Suitland	MD	38.8522	-76.9367
Wallops	VA	37.9465	-75.4621

All other sites currently used in receiving the data would transition to an Alternative Distribution System (ADS) that would not rely on existing means, so protective measures would be unnecessary.

NTIA recommends that the Commission impose coordination requirements to protect these four sites from any harmful interference that otherwise could result from sharing spectrum with anticipated commercial wireless operations. The NTIA SPRES-FO Report provided a methodology to be used in such a coordination process.[4] If commercial operators wish to deploy a base station inside a "coordination zone",[5] they first would have to coordinate with NTIA in collaboration with NOAA. Commercial operators would need to coordinate for a particular base station, and they could ascertain in advance whether NTIA likely would approve a proposed base station by employing a new software tool developed by NTIA.[6]

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[3] NTIA SPRES-FO Report, pp. 17-18.

[4] *See* NTIA SPRES-FO Report, pp. 32-46.

[5] KML shapefiles of the Coordination Zones will be provided to the Commission separately.

[6] This new software tool – which we are calling the "Drocella Methodology" – can be downloaded at https://github.com/nicklasorte/1675MHz_SPRES. The tool would allow commercial operators to adjust proposed base station parameters (*e.g.*, location, antenna height, downtilt angle) to optimize their deployments before coordination. NTIA expects that most base stations can be successfully coordinated. This tool is not intended to pre-judge whatever rule the Commission ultimately adopts, and NTIA can update the tool, if necessary, after the Commission takes final action. The commercial operator can input a variety of technical parameters for a proposed base station, and the tool will generate an "interference power" value in dB. If the tool generates a positive value for a proposed base station, that would be akin to a "green light" and NTIA would be expected to approve the base station. A negative value would mean that NTIA would not approve the base station.

NTIA anticipates that transition plans will be developed and would notify the Commission at least six months prior to auction of any incumbent costs for such relocation or sharing as well as the associated timelines.[7]

Terrestrial Uplink/Downlink/Emission Limits. The band is suitable for terrestrial use as uplink or downlink, but for terrestrial downlink operation we recommend that the Commission impose the same emission limits as it does for 1670-1675 MHz (*i.e.*, 47 C.F.R. § 27.53(k)).

Alternative Distribution System. Integral to sharing the band with commercial wireless operations is the development of an Alternate Distribution System for distribution of the data collected by the NESDIS satellites through a non-spectrum dependent technology/system – such as an internet-based system connected to the four protected sites listed above. Operators of non-protected legacy downlink sites would either shift to receiving the data from this new ADS or attempt direct downlinking on an unprotected basis. The NTIA SPRES-FO Report provides preliminary estimates of the cost of modifying the downlink sites and operating the new distribution system. NOAA would develop and operate the ADS consistent with its statutory mission.

1680-1695 MHz. In addition to the identification of the 1675-1680 MHz band for reallocation, NTIA is collaborating with Federal agencies to conduct a feasibility study for repurposing opportunities in the adjacent spectrum from 1680-1695 MHz, for typical commercial wireless deployments and D2D, including the potential for identifying the full 1675-1695 MHz band for auction.[8] If repurposing this additional 15 megahertz is feasible, NTIA will notify the Commission and work with Federal agencies to submit timely estimates of transition costs and timelines. NTIA very much hopes the study will allow us to formally identify this additional 15 megahertz within the OBBBA's statutory timeframe.[9]

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NTIA stands ready to coordinate with the Commission to fulfill the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's spectrum identification and auction provisions. This initial identification is a

[7] 47 U.S.C. § 923(g).

[8] *See* OBBBA, Section 40002(c)(2)(A) ("Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall identify not less than 200 megahertz of frequencies within the covered band").

[9] Additional timeframes for research and development and planning activities are set forth in 47 U.S.C. § 928(g).

promising start to this crucial collaboration. These efforts will lay the groundwork for American technological innovation and our Nation's continued economic prosperity.

Sincerely,

Arielle Roth
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