



SPECTRUM WARS

I'm sure many of you are aware of the "Consensus Plan" that Nextel, APCO and other public safety and telecommunication organizations have submitted to the

FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB). The proposed plan attempts to solve the interference problems that Nextel and other Commercial Specialized Mobile Radio (CSMR) licensees have inflicted on 800 MHz Public Safety Radio Systems.


Basically, the FCC allowed CSMRs to operate outside of the FCC's Part 90 rules and regulations that restrict the operation of CSMRs near Public Safety Radio Systems. That lack of enforcement opens the door to CSMRs (in particular, Nextel) to place "low site", "high power" transmitters within coverage areas used by 800 MHz Public Safety Radio Systems. When police and fire units respond near these sites, their radios are desensed and become inoperable. The plan's solution, in part, is to migrate public safety licensees 15 MHz down in spectrum to the lower portion of the 800 MHz band. Nextel will exchange their current band allocation with public safety and pay for the move. Other "interleaved" Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Systems such as private radio, business/industrial land transport and other non-cellular Specialized Mobile Radios will also be required to move. Oh, by the way, Nextel is requesting new allocation in the 1.9 GHz band.

Public safety communications are vital to the health and welfare of the public to which they serve. With the war on terrorism being a major concern to public welfare, I am appalled that such a widely publicized plan would be supported by public safety organizations. A disruption in public safety communications would open the door to those that

wish to inflict terror in our communities. Nextel is the source of the problem so why not move them to other spectrums? Other licensees, interleaved within the spectrum, are not interfering with public safety, so leave them alone. Maybe Nextel just needs to lower their power levels and add new filtering schemes to their systems. There must be a better solution to this interference problem that does not impact public safety.

Other parts of the Consensus Plan include options for non-public safety licensees to relocate in the 900 MHz band and new "interference standards" for LMR licensees and designers of LMR radios and systems. I totally agree with the proposed interference standards. The old standards only address co-channel interference, not adjacent channel or out-of-band interference. Along with these new standards, the WTB should reinstate mandatory FCC certification for LMR technicians and engineers. The certification would ensure that the new interference standards are met.

Don't get me wrong, what the parties of the Consensus Plan are attempting to do is eliminate interference to public safety radio systems and believe me, it is appreciated. Now all they need to do is eliminate the need to move public safety in the process.

More information on the Consensus Plan can be found on the FCC web site at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/publicsafety/>. 

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