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For Immediate Release

FCC SEEKS TO PROMOTE INNOVATION IN THE 5.9 GHZ BAND

WASHINGTON, December 12, 2019—The Federal Communications Commission today voted to take a fresh and comprehensive look at the 5.9 GHz (5.850-5.925 GHz) band, proposing rule changes to ensure that this spectrum supports its highest and best use for the American people.

For the past two decades, the entire 75 megahertz of spectrum in the 5.9 GHz band has been reserved for use by Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DSRC), a radio service designed to enable vehicle-related communications. However, after 20 years, DSRC still has not been widely deployed, and this spectrum therefore generally remains unused.

In the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Commission proposes to designate the lower 45 megahertz of the band for unlicensed uses like Wi-Fi. This 45 megahertz sub-band can be combined with existing unlicensed spectrum to provide cutting-edge high-throughput broadband applications on channels up to 160 megahertz wide.

The Commission is proposing to dedicate the remaining 30 megahertz of the band for use by transportation and vehicle safety-related communication services. Specifically, in the NPRM, the Commission proposes to revise its rules to provide Cellular Vehicle to Everything (C-V2X), an emerging standard for transportation applications, with exclusive access to the upper 20 megahertz of the band. Under the Commission's current rules, no spectrum is allocated for C-V2X. The NPRM seeks comment on whether to retain the remaining 10 megahertz for use by DSRC systems or to dedicate it for C-V2X use.

The Commission's decision to revisit use of the band was prompted by the slow deployment of the DSRC service, the emergence of new transportation and other communication technologies, and escalating demand for unlicensed operations like Wi-Fi. The NPRM seeks to achieve a balanced approach that will both improve automobile safety and unleash more wireless innovation for the benefit of the American people.

Action by the Commission December 12, 2019 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 19-129). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving and issuing separate statements.

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