



FCC Announces Tentative Agenda for August 2025 Open Meeting

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By: Jennifer L. Richter, Douglas I. Brandon, Sean T. Conway, Steven A. Rowings, Virginia Hiner Antypas, Halie B. Peacher, Sharanya Sriram

On July 17, the FCC released a tentative agenda for its August Open Meeting, which is scheduled to take place on Thursday, August 7 at 10:30 a.m. ET. The Commission released public drafts of the eight items expected to be considered at the Open Meeting, which are detailed below:

1. Revamping NEPA Review to Accelerate Infrastructure Deployment Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (WT Docket No. 25-217): In this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), the Commission will consider how its environmental rules align with the amended National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which was amended by Congress in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 to help streamline the infrastructure permitting process. The NPRM is in response to President Donald Trump's Executive Order No. 14154 seeking agency review of NEPA-related regulations, which the Commission will undertake to give Commission applicants "efficiency and certainty" in the deployment of infrastructure. Specifically, the NPRM seeks comment on whether the issuance of a geographic area license can be classified as a "major federal action" (MFA) under the amended NEPA, and on whether the statutory amendments to NEPA warrant changes to the Commission's rules on National Historic Preservation Act review. The NPRM additionally seeks comment on whether the Commission should retain its current approach of applying a broad categorical exclusion to MFAs, or whether to adjust its categorical exclusion framework to list specific MFAs that would be categorically excluded. Finally, the NPRM seeks comment on ways to streamline the Commission's environmental review procedures consistent with the language of the amended NEPA and the Commission's policy of modernizing communications networks and simplifying government operations—noting

that such procedures could involve updating the categorical exclusion and extraordinary circumstances rule.

2. Streamlining Space Bureau Reviews Second Report and Order (IB Docket Nos. 22-411, 22-271): In this Second Report and Order (R&O), the Commission seeks to streamline and expedite the licensing approval process needed for satellites and earth stations. The Commission's goal with this R&O is to provide regulatory certainty for the upcoming Ground-Station-as-a-Service industry, "where a neutral host establishes connectivity to multiple satellite systems in space." To achieve this goal, the R&O would accelerate earth station construction, allow applicants to obtain their initial license without identifying a specific satellite point of communication and establish a notification process for earth stations to add communication points. The R&O also aims to streamline satellite licensing by creating seven exemptions for license modification applications, with the goal of making it easier for licensees to upgrade their systems; eliminating the paper copy retention requirements; expanding the renewal application time frame for earth stations and non-geostationary orbit space stations; removing application burdens by making the default ex parte status of all licensing reviews "permit-but-disclose;" allowing non-U.S. licensed market access grantees the option of seeking a grant of special temporary access; and adopting a 30-day shot clock for Commission processing of earth station renewal applications.

3. Accelerating Buildout of Secure Undersea Cable Infrastructure Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (OI Docket No. 24-523, MD Docket No. 24-524): In the R&O, the Commission seeks to unleash high-speed infrastructure deployment and strengthen national security by updating the Commission's rules and procedures to streamline and improve the timeliness and transparency of the FCC's submarine cable licensing process. If adopted, the R&O would, among other things, clarify when a cable landing license is required under the Cable Landing License Act to provide regulatory certainty to submarine cable owners and operators. It would also adopt rules that update the application requirements and definitions to provide a clear regulatory framework and modernize the definition of "submarine cable system" to better reflect the range of technological advancements and components of current systems. In addition, the R&O would bar entities listed on the Covered List or owned by, controlled by or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a foreign adversary from receiving a grant for a cable landing license. Further, if adopted, the R&O would require applicants to make certifications, such as cybersecurity and physical security certifications, and adopt a one-time information collection requiring licensees to supply certain information regarding their operations.

The Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) proposes to exclude presumptively a category of applications from referral to the executive branch agencies if certain standards are met to streamline and improve timeliness of application review. In addition, the Commission proposes increased transparency measures for submarine cable systems by requiring Submarine Line Terminal Equipment (SLTE) owners and operators to become licensees on a cable landing license and seeks comment on a regulatory framework for SLTE owners and operators. To further national security interests, the Commission also proposes additional certification and conditional requirements related to foreign adversaries and seeks comment on whether it should require existing licensees to remove from their submarine cable system all covered equipment or services, within a specified time frame. Finally, the Commission seeks comment on how it can incentivize and encourage the adoption and use of trusted technologies produced and provided by the United States and its foreign allies.

4. Evaluating the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Notice of Inquiry (GN Docket No. 25-223): In this draft Notice of Inquiry (NOI), the Commission initiates the annual inquiry pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which requires the FCC to annually conduct an inquiry concerning the availability of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans, and to determine whether such capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion. Section 706 requires the Commission to issue the report within 180 days after release of this NOI. If adopted, this NOI proposes to focus on the availability of advanced telecommunications capability as measured through deployment and proposes to refocus the Commission's inquiry on whether advanced telecommunications capability "is being deployed," rather than whether it already has been deployed, as was the focus of the 2024 Report. The Commission also seeks comment on whether it should again use 100/20 Mbps as the benchmark for defining advanced telecommunications capability for fixed broadband, and proposes to abolish the long-term goal of 1,000/500 Mbps established in the 2024 Report. The Commission proposes to continue using the previously established short-term goal of advanced telecommunications capability to elementary and secondary schools and classrooms of 1 Gbps per 1,000 students and staff. Finally, the Commission seeks comment on its proposal to use the Broadband Data Collection as the primary data source for analyzing fixed availability.

5. Examining the Nation's Alerting Systems Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (PS Docket No. 25-224): In this NPRM, the Commission seeks to re-examine the national alert and warning systems and explore whether fundamental changes to these systems could make them more effective, efficient and better able to serve the public's needs. In particular, the Commission

states that it intends to examine the Emergency Alert System (EAS), which provides emergency alerts to the public via radio and television, and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), which provides emergency alerts to supported mobile devices. In so doing, the Commission seeks comment on the objectives that effective alert and warning systems should serve. The Commission also asks stakeholders to provide information on which entities need to be able to send alerts to fully accomplish these objectives and how these needs should be addressed in the design of alerting systems. Similarly, the Commission asks stakeholders to provide information on the alert transmission capabilities that a national public alert and warning system must have to achieve its objectives, including the need for resilience, geographic targeting and security. Finally, the NPRM seeks comment on whether EAS and WEA are meeting the needs and expectations of both the public and alerting authorities, and if not, whether EAS and WEA need to be redesigned to fully reach their potential for achieving the nation's alerting objectives.

6. Modernizing the Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS) Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order on Reconsideration (PS Docket Nos. 21-346, 15-80; ET Docket No. 04-35): In the FNPRM, the Commission proposes to modernize the Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS). DIRS is the voluntary, web-based system the Commission uses to collect service status reports and restoration information from communications providers during and after major disasters. The FCC adopted rules making DIRS reporting mandatory in 2024, and the FNPRM contains proposals to reduce the DIRS reporting burdens on communications providers during disasters. The accompanying Order on Reconsideration would clarify the situations in which outage reporting requirements are suspended during DIRS activations.

7. Addressing Business Data Services Pricing Regulations Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Order (WC Docket Nos. 21-17, 17-144): In the NPRM and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the FCC proposes to eliminate certain regulations that apply to legacy circuit-based business data services (BDS) provided by incumbent local exchange carriers. The Commission also proposes to eliminate rate regulation and tariffing obligations for these carriers' legacy BDS. In the alternative, the Commission seeks comment on updates to the tests used to identify areas subject to sufficient competition warranting deregulation and detariffing of lower-capacity (DS3 and below) BDS. In the accompanying Order, the Commission temporarily pauses the triennial updates to the competitive market tests during the pendency of the record in this proceeding.

8. Deleting 98 Obsolete Broadcast Rules and Requirements Direct Final Rule (GN Docket No. 25-133): In furtherance of meeting the modernization and deregulation goals as outlined in Executive Order 14192, Executive Order 14219 and the Commission's Delete, Delete, Delete proceedings goals, this Direct Final Rule would repeal certain broadcast rules that have been identified as obsolete, outdated or unnecessary. More specifically, this Direct Final Rule would repeal 98 rules and requirements that were identified by commenters as no longer serving the public interest. The Direct Final Rule states that repeal is necessary because these rules and requirements regulate obsolete technology, are no longer used in practice by the FCC or licensees, or are otherwise outdated or unnecessary. The Commission also finds that prior notice and comment before repealing these rules is "unnecessary" under the Administrative Procedure Act. However, before repealing these rules, the Direct Final Rule would provide a 10-day period for stakeholders to provide input on that assessment. The identified rules will be automatically repealed absent any significant adverse comments in response to the Direct Final Rule.

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