

FCC Announces Tentative ‘Space Month’ Agenda for October 2025 Open Meeting

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

Despite the ongoing government shutdown and the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) cessation of most of its operations, on October 7, the FCC Chairman Brendan Carr released an ambitious and expansive tentative agenda for the Commission’s October Open Meeting, which is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, October 28th at 10:30 a.m. ET. The Chairman is dubbing October “Space Month” because of new initiatives aimed at modernizing the regulatory framework for space innovation. Public drafts of the nine items expected to be considered at the Open Meeting are detailed below:

1. **Space Modernization for the 21st Century – Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, SB Docket No. 25-306.** The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) would propose to “overhaul and modernize” the space and earth station licensing process. Specifically, the NPRM would propose replacing the Commission’s existing Part 25 rules with new Part 100 rules. Substantively, the NPRM would propose an expedited licensing processing framework based on bright-line criteria that are presumed to be in the public interest, with the goals of accelerating FCC processing timelines and providing greater predictability and flexibility for applicants—creating an “assembly line” designed to facilitate quick and easy application grants. The NPRM also would propose to reform and expedite application handling by simplifying application requirements and timelines, and creating rules that support innovative and novel space activities. Additional efficiency reforms include proposals to modify processing round procedures for non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) satellite systems, remove surety bond requirements for geostationary orbit space stations and for certain NGSO space

stations, and extend license terms for most space stations and earth stations to 20 years, among other proposals. New Part 100 also would delete certain Part 25 rules deemed unnecessary and reorganize the new rules. This NPRM comes at a time of significant growth in the space industry, and this upcoming rulemaking to modernize space licensing is eagerly anticipated by the satellite industry.

2. Facilitating More Intensive Use of Upper Microwave Spectrum – Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, SB Docket No. 25-305. In a nod to the growing space economy and resulting interest in using upper microwave spectrum, and in a tacit acknowledgement of the physical limitations of intensive terrestrial use of millimeter wave frequencies, this draft NPRM would seek comment on measures that will facilitate more intensive satellite use of spectrum in the 24 gigahertz (GHz), 28 GHz, upper 37 GHz, 39 GHz, 47 GHz and 50 GHz bands (together, the UMFUS bands). In response to space industry interest in using the UMFUS bands for Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) operations, the NPRM would seek comment on allowing UMFUS licensees and FSS operators to enter into voluntary agreements that enable more coordinated use of spectrum in the UMFUS bands. The NPRM also would seek comment on revisions to protection criteria in Section 25.137 of the Commission's rules, and generally seek comment on making the earth station application process less burdensome.

3. Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Equipment Authorization Program – Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, ET Docket No. 21-232. This draft proposal would continue the Commission's focus on actions aimed to protect the supply chain for communications equipment and services within the United States. The Second Report and Order (2nd R&O) would clarify that covered equipment includes modular transmitters and thus extend the prohibition on authorization of covered equipment to devices with modular transmitters that are themselves covered equipment. The 2nd R&O also would establish a procedure to limit prior grants of equipment authorizations of covered equipment, indicating that the continued importation and marketing of such equipment is prohibited, but continued operation or use of such devices already in the U.S. is not prohibited. It also would clarify the term "produced by" and the device modification procedures related to covered equipment. The Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2nd

FNPRM) would seek additional comment on modular transmitters and component parts, propose a definition of “critical infrastructure” as used in the Commission’s Covered List of equipment and services deemed to pose a national security risk to the United States, and seek comment on clarifying the scope of activities that constitute the marketing of equipment. The 2nd FNRPM would also seek comment on measures to strengthen enforcement of the marketing prohibitions.

4. Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation” Broadcast Television Standard – Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, GN Docket No. 16-142.

The Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (5th FNPRM) represents the latest step in the Commission’s yearslong effort to support and accelerate the voluntary, market-based broadcast television transition to Next Gen TV that uses the ATSC 3.0 standard. The 5th FNPRM would tentatively conclude that television stations can begin broadcasting exclusively in ATSC 3.0 and should be permitted to broadcast in both the ATSC 1.0 and 3.0 standards. The 5th FNPRM also would seek comment on a broad list of issues related to Next Gen TV, including the sunset of ATSC 1.0 service and options to offset consumer costs.

5. Advancing IP Interconnection – Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket Nos.

25-304, 25-208, 17-97. The NPRM would make a series of proposals to support the transition of communications networks to all-Internet Protocol (IP) technology by revising the Commission’s rules for local exchange carrier (LEC)-specific interconnection. In particular, the NPRM would seek comment on the current state of IP and legacy time-division multiplexing technology for voice services and the impact of eliminating the incumbent LEC-specific interconnection regulatory framework on other statutory frameworks or Commission rules. The NPRM would also seek comment on ways the Commission can facilitate a successful transition to all-IP interconnection for voice services while ensuring oversight of public safety and consumer protection.

6. Empowering Broadband Consumers Through Transparency – Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CG Docket No. 22-2 and GN Docket No. 25-133.

The Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) would propose to pare back existing broadband label rules to reduce compliance costs while complying with statutory requirements. In particular, the FNPRM would propose to eliminate six requirements

for implementing its broadband label rules, including reading the label to consumers over the phone, itemizing state and local passthrough fees that vary based on consumer location, providing information about the now-concluded Affordable Connectivity Program, displaying labels in customer account portals, ensuring labels are machine readable, and archiving labels for two years after discontinuing a service offering. The FNPRM would also seek comment on other issues, including the multilingual display requirement and streamlining other label requirements.

7. Improving Verification and Presentation of Caller Identification Information – Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CG Docket Nos. 17-59, 02-278, 25-307; WC Docket No. 17-97. The FNPRM would consider a proposal related to the Commission’s Secure Telephone Identity Revisited/Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information Using toKENs (STIR/SHAKEN) framework to ensure that consumers are receiving accurate, verified caller name information. In addition, the FNPRM would advance proposals aimed at addressing illegally spoofed calls originated from outside of the United States by stopping those calls before they reach consumer phones and providing consumers with more information about the origination of calls. The FNPRM also would propose actions targeting robocalls, including prohibitions on spoofing of U.S. telephone numbers for calls originating internationally.

8. Incarcerated Persons Calling Services – Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket Nos. 23-62, 12-375. The Commission will consider a Report and Order (R&O) and Order on Reconsideration in response to comments received in a 2024 proceeding related to rate caps for Incarcerated People’s Communications Services (IPCS). In particular, the R&O would update the Commission’s rate cap setting methodology to use only billed minutes, adopt a separate interim rate additive of \$0.02 per minute for facility cost recovery, and adopt new interim audio and video IPCS rate caps. The FNPRM would seek comment on reforms that include establishing permanent rate caps for audio and video IPCS, establishing permanent rate additive or additives for facility cost recovery, and extending the prohibition on site commission payments and ancillary service charges.

9. Deleting Obsolete and Duplicative Wireless Rules – Direct Final Rule – GN Docket No. 25-133. The Commission will consider as part of the *In re: Delete, Delete,*

Delete proceeding a Direct Final Rule that would delete nearly 400 primarily wireless-related rules and requirements in Parts 1, 13, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 54, 74, 80, 87, 88, 90, 95, 96, 97 and 101. In the Direct Final Rule, the Commission would state that the rules at issue have sunset by operation of law, govern expired events and obsolete technology, are duplicative and are no longer used in practice. The Commission also would find that the rules at issue pertain to a wide variety of now-defunct topics including regulatory reporting requirements, technology that has been eclipsed, and dates pertaining to transition plans, cost-sharing obligations, pilot programs, registration procedures, and equipment requirements that have long ago passed. In this Direct Final Rule, the Commission would find that prior notice and comment before repealing these rules is “unnecessary” under the Administrative Procedure Act, and would elect to provide a 20-day period for comment on this assessment, with the identified rules automatically being repealed absent any significant adverse comments in response to this Direct Final Rule.

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