

January 12, 2010

## Alcatel-Lucent position statement on proposed D Block auction

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Over the past few years, Congress has taken important first steps to address the vital issue of public safety interoperability by expediting the increased assignment of radio spectrum for our nation's first responders. There is clearly no debate on the fact that the public safety community must have effective, reliable and interoperable communications, especially during times of national emergency, but also on a day-to-day basis whenever a police officer, fire fighter or other public safety must respond quickly and efficiently. Unfortunately, although Congress provided 24 MHz in the 700 MHz band for public safety narrowband and broadband use to be administered by the Federal Communications Commission, this effort has fallen woefully short in terms of moving interoperability issue forward.

Once again, the FCC is planning to address this issue by the disposition of the D Block via auction, a process that failed miserably when previously implement. Public safety officials, service providers and infrastructure vendors agree that a more effective method would be to allocate the D Block directly to public safety organizations in order to create a national broadband network that would meet the critical needs of first responders.

Alcatel-Lucent has been at the forefront in supporting the creation of a national interoperable public safety broadband network. We strongly oppose another FCC auction and vigorously support the Congress directly reallocating the D Block to public safety.

Moreover, we support federal funding of a public safety nationwide interoperable broadband network for our nation's first responders. Congress' support in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to partially address potential funding for public safety networks via the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program ("BTOP") directed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration is a crucial first step, but more needs to be done.<sup>1</sup> Additional federal grant opportunities focused on 700 MHz broadband first responder networks will facilitate the rapid deployment of these networks across the United States. But there is a need to get started today and BTOP funding would allow those jurisdictions that have filed FCC waiver requests to begin deployment of public safety broadband networks this year. Fourteen jurisdictions across the country have petitioned the Commission via waiver to early deploy under the FCC's rules an interoperable 700 MHz public safety broadband network, as was envisioned by the 9/11 Commission. These jurisdictions include the States of New York and Hawaii, large and small cities New York and Chesapeake, Virginia and larger regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles Region.

We encourage Congress to take action that would ensure the FCC grants waiver requests that not only meet the Commission's rules, but also result in networks that are clearly in the public interest and that result in saved lives.

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<sup>1</sup> See American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Pub. L. No. 111-5, § 6001(b)(4) (2009).