FCC Approves Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Expand 900 MHz Broadband Segment

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Utility-Telecom Industry Coalition Thanks FCC for its Leadership

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- A broad coalition of utilities, trade associations, and the utility technology company Anterix (NASDAQ: ATEX) today expressed gratitude to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its diligent work in developing and ultimately adopting the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to modify the 900 MHz rules. The proposed rules would provide the flexibility to grow the 900 MHz broadband segment from 3 MHz by 3 MHz to 5 MHz by 5 MHz.

After release of the NPRM, the FCC will seek Comments and Reply Comments in advance of a potential final Report & Order. This expansion is an option the FCC considered in its original rulemaking in 2020 modifying the 900 MHz rules when it approved the 3/3 MHz broadband segment, but, at the time, considered it premature. As the record demonstrates, expansion of the 900 MHz band to permit 5/5 MHz broadband will support growing demand for wide-area, private, and secure wireless broadband networks for utilities, critical infrastructure, and business enterprise entities, among other benefits.

“We applaud the FCC for its leadership and commitment to improving the operations and security of our nation’s evolving electric grid through the deployment of private LTE enabled by 900 MHz broadband spectrum,” said Utility Broadband Alliance Executive Director Bobbi Harris. “Critical communications capabilities are playing a key role in the grid’s ongoing evolution to support our nation’s resilient energy future, and today’s action by the Commission is an incredible step toward enhancing those benefits.”

“Today, enterprise organizations across 15 states already are deploying modern wireless 900 MHz broadband networks to support their evolving communications needs,” said Enterprise Wireless Alliance President and CEO Robin Cohen. “This NPRM provides the optionality of more broadband spectrum, as the growing 900 MHz movement can support future deployment of additional users and use cases in this communications evolution.”

“The foresight and stewardship demonstrated in this NPRM by outgoing Chairwoman Rosenworcel, incoming Chairman Carr, and Commissioner Simington and their staffs, as well as the staff that supports that leadership and those that perform vital work in the Wireless Bureau is greatly appreciated,” said Chris Guttman-McCabe, Chief Regulatory and Corporate Communications Officer at Anterix. “The FCC’s decision to advance the Petition submitted by ten organizations—Ameren, Enterprise Wireless Alliance, Evergy, Lower Colorado River Authority, Portland General Electric, San Diego Gas & Electric, Southern Company's Southern Linc, Utility Broadband Alliance, Xcel Energy, and Anterix—signals strong recognition of the 900 MHz private utility broadband movement’s vision and the capabilities of modern grid-enabling communications.”

The adoption of the NPRM is the next step in a proceeding endorsed by more than thirty organizations, including key utilities:

“Adopting a voluntary process to create a 5/5 MHz broadband option is exactly the right thing for the Commission to do today to help utilities prepare for the future, allowing them to pursue not only additional smart grid technologies, but also those with ever-greater bandwidth requirements.” – Ameren Corporation

“Access to broadband capabilities, and especially to the proposed expanded 5/5 MHz option in the 900 MHz band, promises to play a vital role in enabling utilities to design, install, and operate technically advanced networks that meet the expanding bandwidth needs of this industry.” – Evergy

“LCRA agrees that the ability to deploy an expanded 5/5 MHz broadband network will provide utilities with additional capacity to support grid modernization.” – Lower Colorado River Authority

“In addition to accommodating the growth in the volume of data generated by utility applications, the opportunity to deploy a 5/5 MHz broadband channel would also provide significant advantages over the current 3/3 MHz broadband allocation.” – Southern Linc

“Access to expanded 5/5 MHz broadband networks will provide utilities, such as Xcel Energy, with additional capacity to support 900 MHz pLTE broadband deployment with enhanced broadband communications capabilities. The ability to pursue a 5/5 MHz network would increase the options and opportunities for Xcel Energy to enhance cybersecurity and reliability for its operations and customers.” – Xcel Energy

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About Anterix

At Anterix, we partner with leading utilities and technology companies to harness the power of 900 MHz broadband for modernized grid solutions. Leading an ecosystem of more than 100 members, we offer utility-first solutions to modernize the grid and solve the challenges that utilities are facing today. As the largest holder of licensed spectrum in the 900 MHz band (896-901/935-940 MHz) throughout the contiguous United States, plus Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, we are uniquely positioned to enable private wireless broadband solutions that support cutting-edge advanced communications capabilities for a cleaner, safer, and more secure energy future. To learn more and join the 900 MHz movement, please visit www.anterix.com.