

population. However, should a given region be encountering unusually severe amounts of unacceptable interference, that region may be moved up in priority. Any party disputing such a change in priority may refer the matter to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, who hereby is delegated the authority to resolve such disputes. The Transition Administrator may direct that adjoining regions be reconfigured simultaneously when conditions so require.

(5) The Transition Administrator will coordinate relocation of a NPSPAC Region's NPSPAC channels with the relevant Regional Planning Committee(s) prior to commencing band reconfiguration in a NPSPAC Region.

(b) Once band reconfiguration commences in a given NPSPAC Region, the Transition Administrator will:

(1) Monitor the retuning schedule and resolve any schedule delays or refer same to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, for resolution;

(2) Coordinate with adjoining NPSPAC Regions to ensure that interference is not being caused to their existing facilities from relocated stations;

(3) Provide quarterly progress reports to the Commission in such detail as the Commission may require and include, with such reports, certifications by Nextel and the relevant licensees that relocation has been completed and that both parties agree on the amount received from the letter of credit proceeds in connection with relocation of the licensees' facilities. The report shall include description of any disputes that have arisen and the manner in which they were resolved. These quarterly reports need not be audited. The Transition Administrator may select the dates for filing the quarterly progress reports;

(4) Provide the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, with an annual audited statement of relocation funds expended to date, including salaries and expenses of Transition Administrator. The Transition Administrator may select the date for filing the annual audited statement;

(5) Facilitate resolution of disputes by mediation; or referral of the parties

to alternative dispute resolution services as described in § 90.677(d).

(6) Notify the Commission when band reconfiguration is complete in each 800 MHz NPSPAC Region and identify which vacant channels are exclusively available to eligible applicants in the Public Safety or Critical Infrastructure Industry Categories as set forth in § 90.615(a), (b) and 90.617(g), (h).

(c) The Transition Administrator may not serve as the repository of funds used in band reconfiguration, excepting such sums as Nextel may pay for the Transition Administrator's services. Moreover, the Transition Administrator will not be certified by the Commission as a frequency coordinator.

[69 FR 67849, Nov. 22, 2004, as amended at 70 FR 6760, Feb. 8, 2005; 70 FR 76711, Dec. 28, 2005; 71 FR 69038, Nov. 29, 2006]

§ 90.677 Reconfiguration of the 806-824/851-869 MHz band in order to separate cellular systems from non-cellular systems.

In order to facilitate reconfiguration of the 806-824/851-869 MHz band ("800 MHz band") to separate high-density cellular systems from non-cellular systems, Nextel Communications, Inc. (Nextel) may relocate incumbents within the 800 MHz band by providing "comparable facilities." For the limited purpose of band reconfiguration, the provisions of § 90.157 shall not apply and inter-category sharing will be permitted under all circumstances. Such relocation is subject to the following provisions:

(a) Within thirty days of Commission approval of the Transition Administrator, the Transition Administrator described in § 90.676 will provide the Commission with a schedule detailing when band reconfiguration shall commence for each NPSPAC Region. The plan should also detail—by NPSPAC Region—which relocation option each non-Nextel ESMR licensee has chosen. The Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will finalize and approve such a plan. The schedule shall provide for completion of band reconfiguration in no more than thirty-six months following release of a public

notice announcing the start date of reconfiguration in the first NPSPAC region. Relocation will commence according to the schedule set by the Transition Administrator but all systems must have commenced reconfiguration within thirty months of release of a public notice announcing the start date of reconfiguration in the first NPSPAC region.

(b) *Voluntary negotiations.* Thirty days before the start date for each NPSPAC region other than Region 47 and Region 48, the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will issue a public notice initiating a three-month voluntary negotiation period. During this voluntary negotiation period, Nextel and all incumbents may negotiate any mutually agreeable relocation agreement. Sprint Nextel and relocating incumbents may agree to conduct face-to-face negotiations or either party may elect to communicate with the other party through the Transition Administrator.

(c) *Mandatory negotiations.* If no agreement is reached by the end of the voluntary period, a three-month mandatory negotiation period will begin during which both Sprint Nextel and the incumbents must negotiate in “good faith.” In Region 47, a 90-day mandatory negotiation period will begin 60 days after the effective date of the Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in WT Docket 02–55. In Region 48, a 90-day mandatory negotiation period will begin on March 21, 2011. Sprint Nextel and relocating incumbents may agree to conduct face-to-face negotiations or either party may elect to communicate with the other party through the Transition Administrator. All parties are charged with the obligation of utmost “good faith” in the negotiation process. Among the factors relevant to a “good-faith” determination are:

(1) Whether the party responsible for paying the cost of band reconfiguration has made a bona fide offer to relocate the incumbent to comparable facilities;

(2) The steps the parties have taken to determine the actual cost of relocation to comparable facilities; and

(3) Whether either party has unreasonably withheld information, essen-

tial to the accurate estimation of relocation costs and procedures, requested by the other party. The Transition Administrator may schedule mandatory settlement negotiations and mediation sessions and the parties must conform to such schedules.

(d) *Transition Administrator.* (1) The Transition Administrator, or other mediator, shall attempt to resolve disputes referred to it before the conclusion of the mandatory negotiation period as described in § 90.677(c) within thirty working days after the Transition Administrator has received a submission by one party and a response from the other party. Any party thereafter may seek expedited non-binding arbitration which must be completed within thirty days of the Transition Administrator’s, or other mediator’s recommended decision or advice. Should issues still remain unresolved after mediation or arbitration they shall be referred to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau within ten days of the Transition Administrator’s or other mediator’s advice, or if arbitration has occurred, within ten days of the completion of arbitration. When referring an unresolved matter to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, the Transition Administrator shall forward the entire record on any disputed issues, including such dispositions thereof that the Transition Administrator has considered. Upon receipt of such record and advice, the Commission will decide the disputed issues based on the record submitted. The authority to make such decisions is delegated to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau who may decide the disputed issue or designate it for an evidentiary hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. If the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau decides an issue, any party to the dispute wishing to appeal the decision may do so by filing with the Commission, within ten days of the effective date of the initial decision, a Petition for de novo review; whereupon

the matter will be set for an evidentiary hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. Any disputes submitted to the Transition Administrator after the conclusion of the mandatory negotiation period as described in §90.677(c) shall be resolved as described in §90.677(d)(2).

(2) If no agreement is reached during either the voluntary or mandatory negotiating periods, all disputed issues shall be referred to the Transition Administrator, or other mediator, who shall attempt to resolve them. If disputed issues remain thirty working days after the end of the mandatory negotiation period, the Transition Administrator shall forward the record to the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, together with advice on how the matter(s) may be resolved. The Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau is hereby delegated the authority to rule on disputed issues, de novo. If the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau decides an issue, any party to the dispute wishing to appeal the decision may do so by filing with the Commission, within ten days of the effective date of the initial decision, a Petition for de novo review; whereupon the matter will be set for an evidentiary hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.

(e) *Waiver Requests.* Incumbents who wish not to relocate according to the schedule may petition the Commission for a waiver of the relocation obligation. Such a waiver would only be granted on a strict non-interference basis.

(f) *Comparable Facilities.* The replacement system provided to an incumbent must be at least equivalent to the existing 800 MHz system with respect to the four factors described in §90.699(d) part.

(g) *Information Exchange.* Absent agreement between parties, the Transition Administrator will be responsible for determining the information that relocating incumbents must supply in support of a relocation agreement.

(h) The relevant Regional Planning Committee shall be informed of any

proposed changes to any NPSPAC channel.

[69 FR 67849, Nov. 22, 2004, as amended at 70 FR 76711, Dec. 28, 2005; 71 FR 52751, Sept. 7, 2006; 71 FR 69038, Nov. 29, 2006; 75 FR 35318, June 22, 2010; 76 FR 11683, Mar. 3, 2011]

POLICIES GOVERNING THE LICENSING AND USE OF EA-BASED SMR SYSTEMS IN THE 809–824/851–869 MHz BAND

§ 90.681 EA-based SMR service areas.

EA licenses for channels 711 through 830 and Spectrum Blocks A through V listed in Tables 4 and 5 of §90.617 are available in 175 Economic Areas (EAs) as defined in §90.7.

[69 FR 67852, Nov. 22, 2004]

§ 90.683 EA-based SMR system operations.

(a) EA-based licensees authorized in the 809–824/854–869 MHz band pursuant to §90.681 of this part may construct and operate base stations using any of the base station frequencies identified in their spectrum block anywhere within their authorized EA, provided that:

(1) The EA licensee affords protection, in accordance with §90.621(b), to all previously authorized co-channel stations that are not associated with another EA license;

(2) The EA licensee complies with any rules and international agreements that restrict use of frequencies identified in their spectrum block, including the provisions of §90.619 relating to U.S./Canadian and U.S./Mexican border areas;

(3) The EA licensee limits the field strength of its base stations at any location on the border of the EA service area in accordance with §90.689;

(4) Upon request by an incumbent licensee or the Commission, the EA licensee shall furnish the technical parameters, location and coordinates of the completion of the addition, removal, relocation or modification of any of its facilities within the EA. The EA licensee must provide such information within ten (10) days of receiving a written request.

(5) For any construction or alteration that would exceed the requirements of §17.7 of this chapter, licensees must notify the appropriate Regional