



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2020

Media Contact:

Martha Ellis
info@thepssa.org
702-620-4900

PUBLIC SAFETY SPECTRUM ALLIANCE (PSSA) EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT WITH FCC ACTION TO ALLOCATE PUBLIC SAFETY SPECTRUM TO THE STATES.

LAS VEGAS, Nev.—[The Public Safety Spectrum Alliance \(PSSA\)](#), a coalition to protect public safety’s use of mission-critical spectrum, including the 4.9 GHz Band, announced that it will not be deterred by the FCC’s action today to reallocate the 4.9 GHz spectrum to the states that has previously been allocated solely to public safety. “We are extremely disappointed by the FCC’s action that jeopardizes public safety’s access to spectrum critical to life-saving operations. Today’s action by the FCC shows clearly that commercial interests won out at public safety’s expense” according to Chief Jeff Johnson, CEO of the Western Fire Chiefs Association (WFCA) and former vice chairman of the FirstNet Authority. “This spectrum was allocated by the FCC to public safety after 9/11 to be part of the interoperability solution for first responders. When will our government authorities put the interests and safety of public safety and the communities they serve ahead of commercial interests? The FCC itself has acknowledged, the 4.9 GHz band has been under-utilized because of the FCC’s complicated rules and the narrow use cases envisioned by the FCC in 2002. And yet today they take this action when the record does not support such an action as was pointed out by Commissioner Rosenworcel.”

The FCC has now blind-sided the public safety community without notice or the ability to comment on their chosen approach by taking the 4.9 GHz spectrum away from public safety without regard for the sanctity of existing and future public safety communications. The PSSA has been working for months to help educate the FCC and Congress on the necessary changes to the FCC’s rules to ensure optimal use of the 4.9 GHz spectrum by first responders. Other public safety groups have similarly provided the FCC comments and suggestions on the record to ensure greater public safety utilization of the spectrum through appropriate revisions to the FCC’s current rules, which artificially limit the ability of public safety to take full advantage of the spectrum today. These comments have been available to the FCC for well over a year yet they have been largely ignored by the FCC in its decision today.

The PSSA initiative has served as public safety's voice to communicate the vital need for 4.9 GHz spectrum and to assign it to the FirstNet Authority — an independent authority created for the purpose of managing spectrum dedicated to public safety -- which is in the best position to work collaboratively with the public safety community to determine a nationwide plan that optimizes the ability to protect life and property through use of the spectrum and advanced technologies. The PSSA has been operating under three basic principles:

- Protect and preserve 4.9 GHz nationwide spectrum for public safety use.
- Assign the 4.9 GHz spectrum to the FirstNet Authority on behalf of public safety.
- Require the FirstNet Authority to develop a spectrum plan for the 50 MHz of public safety spectrum at 4.9 GHz. This plan would allow for the continued support and protection of existing public safety licensees while also allocating a portion of the spectrum for 5G technologies and potentially integrating it with the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN).

“From our point of view, our effort is not over” according to retired Police Chief Chris Moore who served as Chair of the Public Safety Alliance and is part of the leadership team for the PSSA. “Ten nationwide public safety associations along with over 800 individual public safety leaders who have signed our petition agree that the 4.9 GHz spectrum assigned to public safety should stay with public safety.” When asked what steps the PSSA will take next, Moore stated, “Our legal counsel is preparing a list of options for consideration. Once we have reviewed these options, we will quickly move forward and take action to seek reversal of this clearly arbitrary and harmful decision. We would also like to publicly thank those commissioners that voted against this ill-conceived plan. As we said during the battle for the D Block, “public safety leaders don’t quit when it comes to the safety of the public we serve.”

About PSSA

The Public Safety Spectrum Alliance (PSSA) is an alliance amongst the nation’s leading public safety leaders and associations. The PSSA is an initiative of the Public Safety Broadband Technology Association. The purpose of the PSSA is to ensure that first responders nationwide are able to use the most technologically advanced communications capability that meets the difficult, life threatening challenges they face as they protect America. Our goal is to raise awareness in the FCC, Congress and the White House about what our broadband public safety communications needs are, including use of 4.9 GHz and the continued enhancement of FirstNet—the only nationwide, interoperable wireless communications network built for the first responders who protect America.

The PSSA is open to anyone who supports the goals of this Alliance, including individuals and the private sector. To learn more, additional information and resources can be found at <http://www.thepssa.org>.

About PSBTA

The Public Safety Broadband Technology Association (PSBTA) is an organization focused exclusively on ensuring the success of the entire FirstNet ecosystem that includes the legal entity created by Congress, the network infrastructure, hardware and software, and the single most important component—the end users.

###