



NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

*The Voice of Rural Telecommunications*

www.ntca.org

June 23, 2011

***Ex Parte Notice***

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

***In re: In the Matter of Rural Cellular Association's Petition for Rulemaking re: Exclusivity Arrangements between Commercial Wireless Carriers and Handset Manufacturers RM-11497; In the Matter of CTIA Petition for Rulemaking Regarding the Transition of Part 22 Cellular Services to Geographic Market-Area Licensing, RM-11510; In the Matter of a National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket No. 09-51; In the Matter of the High-Cost Universal Service Support and Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, WC Docket 05-337, and CC Docket 96-45; Petition for Rulemaking Regarding 700 MHz Band Mobile Equipment Design and Procurement Practices, RM-11592 ; AT&T Inc. and Deutsche Telecom seek FCC Consent to the Transfer of Control of the Licenses and Authorizations held by T-Mobile USA, Inc. and its Subsidiaries to AT&T Inc., WT Docket No. 11-65***

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Tuesday, June 21, 2011, members of the Industry and Wireless Committees of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (“NTCA”), together with the undersigned and other staff from NTCA, met with Jim Schlichting, Senior Deputy Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at NTCA’s offices in Arlington, VA. A list of meeting attendees is attached.

During the meeting, individual committee members expressed general concerns about spectrum auction processes, suggesting that future auctions should include small license blocks so that carriers of all sizes have a reasonable opportunity to obtain much-needed spectrum. Committee members also urged the Federal Communications Commission (the “Commission”) to act on handset exclusivity, pointing out exclusive agreements between handset manufacturers and large wireless providers hurt competition and rural consumers. Individual committee members also discussed whether the pending combination of AT&T and T-Mobile might exacerbate any such difficulties that their small companies face in offering mobile wireless service in rural areas. They also pointed out that smaller providers have typically demonstrated much greater commitment than larger regional or national providers with respect to building out in sparsely populated rural areas, and that it is important to foster and enforce conditions that will promote the most efficient and effective use of spectrum that continues to go unutilized or underutilized in such areas.

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

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Committee members also highlighted the importance of universal service funding and how it permits them to offer mobile wireless service in areas that have been neglected by larger regional or national providers. They also pointed out that reliance on universal service support could be reduced – and much greater in-roads made into customer adoption – if there were more reasonable terms and conditions with respect to handset exclusivity, interoperability and strict compliance with the data roaming requirements.

Finally, individual committee members talked briefly regarding geographic area cellular licensing. These members discussed the fact that they still rely on the cellular licensing “fill in” rules and have concerns about being shut out of any overlay auction process.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission’s rules, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS with your office. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 351-2016 or mromano@ntca.org.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael R. Romano

Michael R. Romano

Senior Vice President - Policy

Enclosure

cc: Jim Schlichting

**2011 NTCA'S JOINT INDUSTRY & WIRELESS COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, June 21, 2011**

**Attendees List**

**NTCA Staff**

Michael Romano  
Jill Canfield  
Richard Schadelbauer  
Steve Fravel  
Jesse Ward

**Industry Committee Members**

Dennis Bachman  
Richard Coit  
Wendy Fast  
Jason Dandridge  
David Fox  
Keith Galitz  
Phil Hayes  
Ray Henagen  
Denny Law  
Keith Larson  
Wendel M. Myers  
Lonnie Pedersen  
Gregory Sapp  
Ron Strecker  
Jean Thaxton  
Bruce Todd

**Wireless Committee Members**

Mark Benton  
Ryan Johnson  
Ray Meyer  
Tom Preston  
Scott Sherman  
Bill Wade