



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2003

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Meribeth McCarrick at (202) 418-0654
Chelsea Fallon at (202) 418-7991

WIRELESS BUREAU ANNOUNCES THE STATE OF MICHIGAN TO INITIATE A STUDY ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIONS TOWERS ON MIGRATORY BIRDS

*Study Will Be Conducted in Connection with Construction of
Michigan's Statewide 800 MHz Public Safety System*

Washington, D.C. - The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Wireless Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission announces the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (Agreement) today with the State of Michigan (Michigan) and the FCC Enforcement Bureau regarding Michigan's 800 MHz public safety licenses. The Agreement between the Bureaus and Michigan ensures that in connection with the construction of its statewide Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS), Michigan will comply with requirements under the FCC's rules implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The statewide MPSCS includes 180 towers, which support essential communications for state and local public safety agencies.

The Agreement recognizes Michigan's commitment to participate in and facilitate an Avian Collision Study (Avian Study) at selected towers in the MPSCS. The Avian Study, which will be conducted over the next 2½ years, will contribute to the understanding of the effects of communications towers on birds protected by the ESA and migratory birds. Michigan's commitment to the Avian Study is memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding signed today between Michigan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director – Twin Cities Office and the Chief, Office of Law Enforcement (collectively, USFWS).

The Avian Study was developed and designed collaboratively by ornithologist Paul Kerlinger, of Curry and Kerlinger, and wildlife biologist Al Manville, of the USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, and reviewed by volunteer ornithological scientists with the assistance of the Ornithological Council. The Study is intended to systematically research the effect of lighting, height, and guy wires on avian collisions at selected towers in the 350-500 foot height range in the MPSCS. The variety of types and heights of towers within the system provides conditions that are conducive to systematically measuring the effects of these variables. Depending on funding and the ability to negotiate access, the Avian Study may also be expanded to include some taller towers. The study is designed to help identify reasonable and cost-effective measures that might be available to minimize any impacts of the studied towers on birds protected by the ESA and migratory birds.

This Agreement promotes Chairman Powell's action plan, announced in May, to improve the Commission's ability to protect valuable historic and environmental resources, while at the same time accelerating the process of developing necessary communications infrastructure. Specifically, by providing empirical scientific information on bird collisions with towers, the study will help the Commission carry out its environmental responsibility in an efficient, effective, and streamlined manner.

On August 20, 2003, the Commission also released a *Notice of Inquiry* to gather comment and information on the impact that communications towers may have on migratory birds.

Copies of the Avian Study and Agreement are available at the Wireless Bureau's website at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/siting/>, along with information about complying with the FCC's NEPA rules.

FCC Contacts: Donald Johnson, (202) 418-7444, donald.johnson@fcc.gov or Susan Kimmel, (202) 418-1679, susan.kimmel@fcc.gov .