

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

*Re: Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band; WT Docket
No. 02-55*

The interference situation in the 800 MHz band is one of the most challenging wireless issues the Commission has ever faced. We are trying to untangle years of actions that have created unacceptable and dangerous interference problems for our nation's first responders. I am pleased to support today's item because it puts in place the necessary components to greatly minimize, and hopefully eliminate, the interference currently experienced by our nation's first responders who communicate on land mobile radio systems in the 800 MHz band, particularly during times of emergency. This interference is an unacceptable crisis that must be fixed. Today we give our licensees what they asked for – the regulatory tools to solve the problem both through rebanding and enhanced best practices.

The urgent needs of the public safety community is one of the top priorities of the Commission, and certainly this Commissioner. Public safety officials put their lives on the line for all of us every day, and their situation commands the highest level of attention and priority at the Commission. The very first paragraph of the Communications Act charges the Commission to promote “the safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication.”

Today we step up to that responsibility, and it is important that in doing so we speak with one voice as a Commission. The stakes here are as high as in any proceeding we consider. We simply have to get this right. Throughout this proceeding, I have worked very hard with my colleagues to explore all aspects of rebanding, including different mechanisms for funding and a variety of spectrum configuration options. We worked tirelessly through countless options to find the approach that met the concerns of public safety while remaining within the bounds of the authority granted to us by Congress.

I know that some may say that the Commission moved too slowly to take this action. But I want to emphasize that the time has been very well spent. Since early this year, my staff and I, in conjunction with some of the other Commissioner offices, have worked extensively with the Commission staff to ensure that this item provides the best blueprint possible for 800 MHz rebanding. There simply is too much at stake to get this wrong. It is especially important that we put in place an appropriate mechanism to ensure that all necessary resources are provided to meet the needs of public safety agencies, and that any incentives to limit assistance are minimized. I also am pleased that the item puts in place procedures to minimize as much as possible the impact of our decision on 800 MHz licensees not directly implicated by the interference problem.

Finally, while this proceeding likely impacted every Bureau and Office in the Commission, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the staff of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau in tackling this once in a lifetime challenge. I want to specifically thank Michael Wilhelm, who managed this project from the beginning, and the staff of the Public Safety and

Critical Infrastructure Division for their outstanding work on this project – it truly has been a fine performance of government service.

This decision's primary goal is to protect the nation's police, fire and emergency medical personnel who are on the front lines of our country's public safety efforts. Our decision today puts that priority front and center, right where it belongs.