

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN
JULIUS GENACHOWSKI**

Re: Revision of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules to Permit Unlicensed National Information Infrastructure (U-NII) Devices in the 5 GHz Band

Most everyone in this room or watching at home has had a direct experience with the problem we're seeking to solve.

You're at an airport, a convention, or hotel and you break out your laptop, tablet, or smartphone, hoping you can get a Wi-Fi connection.

One moment you're saying, "Great, I can get online." Moments later, you're saying, "Not so fast," literally.

Wi-Fi congestion is a very real and growing problem. Like licensed spectrum, demand for unlicensed spectrum threatens to outpace supply. The core challenge is the dramatically increased use of wireless devices, which require spectrum.

Recently published data from Cisco estimates that commercial wireless networks are already offloading 33% of all traffic to Wi-Fi and project that offloading will grow to 46% by 2017.

So while Wi-Fi offload is part of the solution to the problem of congested cellular networks, Wi-Fi's popularity is creating congestion issues of its own.

And Wi-Fi congestion isn't just a problem at airports or public venues. It's becoming a problem in the home, where it's increasingly common to have multiple data-hungry devices using Wi-Fi at the same time.

For the past few years, the Commission has been pursuing a strong agenda to free up both licensed and unlicensed spectrum for broadband. We have been and will continue to be relentless in our work to free up spectrum, and we will lean into every opportunity that can meet the country's spectrum needs.

We're moving forward with world-leading policies, like freeing up spectrum for auctions to unleash very large amounts of licensed spectrum for our commercial wireless networks – a very high priority.

Spectrum auctions have had, and will continue to have, a huge positive impact on our economy and lives.

And as part of the incentive auctions proceeding, we're also paving the way for next-generation Wi-Fi by ensuring for the first time that low-band unlicensed spectrum will be available on a nationwide basis, using consistent frequencies.

Today, the FCC takes a big step to ease congestion on traditional Wi-Fi networks, which will mean faster speeds and fewer headaches for U.S. consumers.

Unlicensed spectrum is also a great success story for both the FCC and the U.S. economy.

In the 1980s, the FCC became the world's first agency to make available unlicensed spectrum suitable for WiFi-type uses, meaning anyone could use it as long as they follow basic rules to prevent interference. The use of this unlicensed spectrum sparked innovative technologies like Bluetooth and, perhaps most notably Wi-Fi.

These technologies have spurred job creation and economic growth – hundreds of billions of dollars of value creation for our economy and consumers, resulting in billions of dollars to the Treasury.

We must keep nurturing today's Wi-Fi, as we also continue to be forward-looking, and develop the next generation of unlicensed spectrum use policies.

Today's proposal would modify the rules to make the existing unlicensed 5GHz spectrum more usable, and to provide access to additional new unlicensed spectrum in that band.

Specifically, the proposal would increase and free up the unlicensed spectrum available for ultra-high-speed, high-capacity Wi-Fi – known as “Gigabit Wi-Fi” – by up to 35 percent – from 555 megahertz to 750 megahertz of spectrum: the largest block of unlicensed spectrum to be made available for expansion of Wi-Fi since 2003.

This additional spectrum will increase speeds and alleviate Wi-Fi congestion at major hubs, such as airports, convention centers and large conference gatherings.

In addition, this would also increase speed and capacity for Wi-Fi in the home where multiple users and devices are often on the network at the same time.

Because the 5GHz band is already used for other purposes by both federal and non-federal users, the effort will require significant consultation with stakeholders to enable non-interfering shared use of the spectrum.

But consultation can't be an excuse for inaction or delay.

We must all be guided by the President's directive to free up spectrum for commercial use, and by the critical importance of increasing the availability of spectrum to drive economic growth, job creation, and our country's global competitiveness.

These are goals and interests we all share. We must pursue all ideas to accelerate freeing up spectrum.

We are committed to a process of consultation, and we're also committed to moving expeditiously to free up additional spectrum for Wi-Fi. We look forward to working with all government and non-government stakeholders.

Thank you to OET, WTB, EB, IB and OGC for your excellent work on this item, and Renee Gregory in my office.