

# National Journal

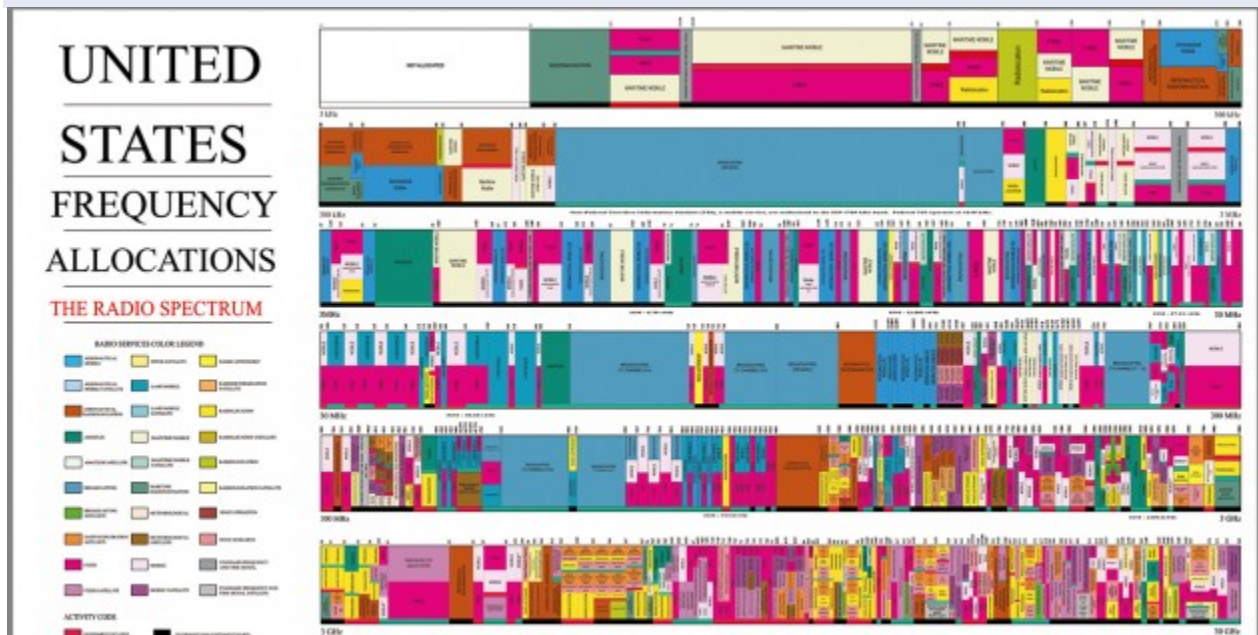
TECHNOLOGY

## Wireless Industry Already Looking Ahead for More Spectrum

by Juliana Gruenwald

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NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

United States Frequency Allocations chart

While pleased with the new law that will free up airwaves now used by broadcasters, wireless-industry officials say policymakers need to start looking for other sources of spectrum. They see the federal government as the next big target.

“The biggest holder of spectrum in this country is the government and we think there is a lot of spectrum that is just laying fallow, that is just not being used,” former Rep. **Steve Largent**, R-Okla., president and CEO of the wireless-industry group CTIA, said at an Institute for Policy Innovation event on Wednesday. “There are different people within the government, whether it’s the DoD or the FBI, who think they might need it sometime or need it once a year. So there is ... spectrum that we think can be used more efficiently and effectively.”

The Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which manages the government’s spectrum holdings, disputes industry claims that federal agencies are not efficient users of spectrum. Still, the Obama administration agreed last year that some of the spectrum needed to meet the nation’s growing demand for wireless technologies would have to come

from federal users. The administration pledged to find 500 megahertz of spectrum from various sources over the next decade.

The spectrum legislation signed into law last week as part of the payroll-tax cut package is projected at best to free up 120 megahertz from broadcasters who opt to give some up. Given this, Largent and other industry officials say they want policymakers to be looking for other sources.

“Our view is [the spectrum legislation] is, in a way, a down payment,” Charla Rath, Verizon’s vice president for wireless policy, said at the same event. “We need to be thinking about how we get a continuous supply of spectrum out there for commercial mobile wireless and for other innovative uses to make sure that we actually have enough spectrum out there. And, frankly, one of the key places to look is government spectrum, and I think in a way that is our next big legislative push.”

Wireless carriers had been lobbying for the inclusion of language in the spectrum legislation that would require the [Defense Department to give up](#) a chunk of spectrum in the 1755-1780 band that industry has long coveted. Defense ultimately won the battle and the language was dropped from the final version of the bill.

Mark Stachiw, general counsel and vice chairman for MetroPCS, noted that the 1755-1780 band is ideally suited for pairing with so-called AWS-3 spectrum the FCC already had available for auction, which is why the industry has been so eager to get its hands on that band.

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