



FCC EXTENDS 2 GHZ BAS RELOCATION DEADLINE

[TV TechCheck of March 30, 2009](#), reported on the filing by Sprint Nextel, the Association for Maximum Service Television, NAB, and the Society of Broadcast Engineers to waive until February 2010 the deadline by which Sprint Nextel must complete the relocation of the Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) licensees in the 1990-2025 MHz band. In a *Report and Order*, released on June 12, 2009, the FCC announced that it had granted the request to extend the deadline. This removes the immediate concern that broadcasters who have not yet completed the BAS transition could have lost access to the BAS frequencies they currently use for ENG and/or studio-transmitter links.

In addition to waiving the deadline, the FCC publication includes an *Order* related to the use of the freed-up spectrum by Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) Operators, and also a *Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making* about sharing of costs relating to relocation of BAS incumbents, and other issues relating to completion of the relocation process, including seeking comments on incentives to encourage BAS licensees to complete the transition without delay. Extracts from the FCC document follow.



“In this *Report and Order and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, we address the ongoing relocation of the Broadcast Auxiliary Service (BAS) from the 1990-2110 MHz band to the 2025-2110 MHz

band. The rules and procedures we adopt, as well as the modifications we propose, are crafted to ensure the continuity of important BAS operations – such as remote newsgathering operations and studio-to-transmitter links – while completing a transition that will make 35 megahertz of valuable spectrum available for many different new services by Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) operators, Sprint Nextel Corporation (Sprint Nextel), and future Advanced Wireless Services (AWS) licensees.

In the *Report and Order and Order*, we:

- waive until February 8, 2010 the deadline by which Sprint Nextel is required to complete the transition of the BAS incumbents to frequencies above 2025 MHz;
- eliminate the requirement that MSS operators may not begin operations until the relocation of BAS in the thirty largest markets and all fixed BAS links in all markets is complete;
- address the interference environment during the period in which both MSS and BAS operate in the 2000-2020 MHz band by permitting the MSS entrants to conduct operations where the BAS incumbents have not been relocated only if they successfully coordinate with the BAS incumbents; and
- waive our rules governing when an MSS operator may provide Ancillary Terrestrial Component (ATC) service in relation to commercial satellite service.

In the *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (Further Notice), we:

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- tentatively conclude that MSS operators and future AWS licensees will have an obligation to share, on a *pro rata* basis, in the costs associated with the relocation of BAS incumbents if they “enter the band” prior to the BAS sunset date of December 9, 2013;
- tentatively conclude that an MSS operator “enters the band” and thus incurs an obligation to share in the costs associated with relocation of BAS incumbents when its satellite is found operational under its authorization milestone;
- seek comment on various approaches for when MSS operators should be required to reimburse Sprint Nextel for their *pro rata* shares of the relocation costs;
- invite additional analysis on whether MSS entrants can operate on a secondary basis without coordination where BAS incumbents have not been relocated;
- propose to clarify that MSS operators retain an obligation to relocate BAS incumbents after the MSS operator begins operations; and
- seek comment on incentives to continue to encourage BAS licensees to complete the relocation process without unnecessary delay.

All of the matters addressed herein relate to our fundamental goals of completing the relocation of BAS operations from the 1990-2025 MHz band and providing for the operation of new services on those frequencies.”

The Commission makes clear that this will be the last extension granted, and that there will be consequences if the transition is not completed, saying “...we intend to exercise appropriate enforcement action if Sprint Nextel is not able to complete the BAS transition by February 8, 2010 for reasons it could have reasonably avoided, we also believe that there should be appropriate consequences for BAS licensees for failure to complete the relocation by the new deadline.”

Initially there were eight MSS operators seeking to use the 2GHz band, but this has now declined to only two, New ICO Satellite Services (ICO) and TerreStar Networks. ICO launched its satellite in April 2008, but it is not clear when it will be ready to start operations. TerreStar has not yet launched its satellite.

The *Report and Order* eliminates requirement that MSS operators may not begin operations until the relocation of BAS in the thirty largest markets and all fixed BAS links in all markets is complete. It does, however, require that during the period in which both MSS and BAS operate in the same part of the 2GHz band, the MSS entrants may conduct operations where the BAS incumbents have not been relocated only if they successfully coordinate with the BAS incumbents. Station engineers and local BAS frequency coordinators should therefore anticipate the possibility they will be contacted by the MSS companies to discuss possible interference issues, if one or both MSS companies are ready to start operations during this transition period.

[Click here](#) for the full text of the *Report and Order and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making* from the FCC. Comments are due 21 days after the NPRM is published in the Federal Register, which has not yet occurred. [Click here](#) for the June 2009 BAS Relocation Project Progress Report to the FCC. Further information on the 2 GHz relocation project in general is at www.2ghzrelocation.com.



NAB Satellite Uplink Operators Training Seminar October 5 - 8, 2009 • Washington, DC

This four-day course is designed to instruct about uplink operational practices, which minimize the risk of satellite transmission interference. This is an important course since the FCC rules

require that a trained operator be present at all times during transmissions, either an earth station site or designated remote control point. Go to <http://www.nab.org/satelliteSeminar/> or Contact NAB Science & Technology Department at (202) 429-5346 or ccolerid@nab.org for information about the NAB Satellite Uplink Operators Training Seminar. If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities for this event contact NAB Advertising at (800) 521-8624 or advertising@nab.org.



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