

FCC Announces Postponements in Response to COVID-19

March 27, 2020

(Updated April 17, 2020)

The FCC has issued public notices announcing it has postponed two spectrum auctions and the deadlines for comments in multiple proceedings, for certain reports and for certain applications in response to COVID-19. These are the auctions and deadlines that have been postponed:

Auctions

- **Citizens Broadband Radio Service Auction** – The entire process for the [auction](#) for spectrum in the 3550-3650 MHz band for the Citizens Broadband Radio Service has been postponed. The window to apply for the auction is now April 23 through May 7; previously it was scheduled to run from March 26 through April 9. The auction itself is now scheduled to begin July 23; it originally was scheduled to begin on June 25. This spectrum is “mid-band” spectrum that is particularly valuable for deployment of 5G services.
- **FM Radio Auction:** An [auction](#) of 130 FM Radio broadcast authorizations, scheduled to begin April 28, has been postponed indefinitely. The FCC has dismissed all of the applications that were filed for the auction and will refund all upfront payments made by qualified bidders. Once the FCC sets a new date, parties that wish to participate will have to file new applications. Given the other auctions already on the FCC’s calendar, it is likely this auction will not be rescheduled until 2021.

Application deadlines

- **Applications for Support from the Rural Health Care Program:** The FCC has [extended](#) the window for applications for funding from the Rural Health Care Program for funding year 2020. The new deadline is June 30; the original deadline was April 30.

Comment deadlines

- **2020 Communications Marketplace Report:** The FCC has extended the deadlines for comments and reply comments on the state of competition in communications businesses, which will be used in preparation of a report to Congress on the communications marketplace. Comments were originally due on April 13 and reply comments were due on May 13; now comments are due on April 27 and reply comments are due on May 28.
- **5.859-2.925 GHz Rulemaking:** The FCC has [extended](#) the deadline for reply comments on its proposed rules to repurpose the 5.850-5.925 GHz band, currently assigned for use for smart transportation, to split the band between smart transportation users and unlicensed wireless service. The new deadline is April 27; the original deadline was April 6.
- **Remand of the Restoring Internet Freedom Rulemaking:** The FCC has [extended](#) the deadlines for comments and reply comments on specific issues raised by the Court of Appeals in its [decision](#) on the Restoring Internet Freedom order, which eliminated prior regulations on internet service providers. The decision extend the deadlines by 21 days, so comments are now due April 20 and reply comments are now due May 20.

- **Population Distribution Methodology for Alaska Plan:** The FCC has [extended](#) the deadlines for comments and reply comments on a proposed population distribution model. Under the FCC's Alaska Plan to extend mobile service to remote areas of the state, the model will be used to estimate the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas and to determine whether mobile service providers participating in the Alaska Plan have met their performance commitments through deployment in those census blocks. Comments and reply comments are now due April 7 and April 17, respectively; the original deadlines were due March 26 and April 10.
- **Reply comments on rates for interstate inmate calling services:** The FCC has [extended](#) the deadline for reply comments in its proceeding to refresh the record on the appropriate rates for calling services for prison inmates following a Court of Appeals decision raising questions about the FCC's authority to regulate certain services. The new deadline is April 21; the original deadline was April 6.

Reporting deadlines

- **Reporting deadlines for broadcasters:** The FCC has [extended](#) the deadline for the first annual Children's Television Programming Reports. The reports now are due on July 10; the original deadline was March 30. Concurrently, the FCC extended the deadline for television and radio broadcasters to place their first quarter issues/programs lists in their public files to July 10; the original deadline was April 10. The new deadline is the same as the deadline for placing second quarter issues/programs lists in public files, which has not been changed.

The FCC could make additional changes to these dates in the future, depending on the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of parties to participate in the auctions or the pending proceedings.

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