



## **TALKING POINTS ON D BLOCK (S. 28/H.R. 607)**

- There is a need among our country's local, tribal, state and federal government agencies for the additional D block spectrum to build a robust mobile wireless broadband network that will improve our nation's homeland security and provide first responders with new interoperable communications technologies that are urgently needed.
- The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is a member of the Public Safety Spectrum Trust (PSST), a not-for-profit organization consisting of representatives of fifteen national public safety organizations; and the PSST holds the nationwide Public Safety Broadband License (PSBL) for 10MHz of broadband spectrum in the 700MHz band.
- NSA is supporting legislation to reallocate an additional 10MHz of spectrum in the 700MHz band, known as the "D Block," to public safety and to provide for dedicated and sustained funding to build a nationwide public safety interoperable mobile broadband network.
- The additional 10MHz of spectrum will be combined with the current 10MHz of broadband spectrum that is allocated to public safety to create a 20MHz block of spectrum to build a nationwide public safety interoperable broadband network.
- Recent government and other studies have shown that public safety will not be able to obtain the necessary bandwidth and speed for our current and future needs based on 10MHz of broadband spectrum alone
- When built, the new public safety broadband network will be able to support a wide range of public safety, government, critical infrastructure and consumer applications such as voice, video, and internet services, including:
  - transmitting high resolution pictures and building blueprints
  - on-the-scene telemedicine services
  - emergency vehicle telematics, such as GPS tracking
  - incident command and control operations
  - two-way video conferencing; video monitoring and broadcast services
  - first responder health monitoring equipment
  - emergency management programs
  - large scale evacuation management
  - public alerting and alarm services
  - enabling next generation 9-1-1

- Under current law, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is required to auction off the D Block spectrum; an auction that was unsuccessful in its first attempt in 2008. Unless Congress changes the law, the FCC is required to auction off the D Block.
- Rather than attempting another auction, NSA, along with multiple public safety organizations in the PSST, believe it is more productive to require the FCC to directly allocate the D Block spectrum to the public safety community.
- Allocating the D Block to public safety enables public safety to KNOW that the network and communication will be there when needed. Commercial networks do not and will not provide the reliability needed for mission critical public safety communications -- we cannot agree to an unproven, untested theoretical plan that puts its first responders and citizens in real jeopardy.
- Without Congressional intercession, we fear that this process will continue to remain unresolved and further delay the efforts to develop and implement a broadband network, necessary in assisting the nation's first responders in homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts.
- Therefore, the National Sheriffs' Association strongly supports **S. 28 - Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act of 2011** introduced by Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV). This legislation would mandate the FCC allocate the D Block to public safety (rather than auctioning it) for the creation of the national public safety interoperable mobile broadband network; as well as providing the funding necessary to build the broadband network.
- In addition to S. 28, Rep. Peter King (R-NY), current Chairman of the House Homeland Security Hearing Committee, introduced last year the Broadband for First Responders Act, and the Senate Homeland Security Chairman Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) introduced the First Responders Protection Act in the Senate. The 111<sup>th</sup> Congress House version garnered 81 bi-partisan cosponsors prior to adjournment in December.
- Recently, Rep. King and Rep. Thompson introduced **H.R. 607 – Broadband for First Responder Act of 2011** in the House. H.R. 607 also allocates the D Block to public safety and provides a funding mechanism to create a nationwide public safety interoperable mobile broadband network. NSA also supports this legislation and encourages sheriffs to urge their House Members to become cosponsors
- We strongly urge you to support and cosponsor legislation to allocate the D Block to public safety.
- Furthermore High-level Administration and White House officials briefed public safety and state and local government officials ahead of the President's State of the Union speech about the Administration's National Wireless Initiative that will include a policy to allocate the D-Block to public safety and provide significant federal funding in excess of \$10 billion that is being derived from incentive based and other spectrum auctions\* for the build-out, research and development and sustainability of the 20-MHz LTE/4G nationwide public safety broadband network.

- In the briefing, the Vice President's office made it clear the Administration wants legislation to be passed quickly and that the public safety broadband network is a priority for the President in 2011.
- Allocation of the D Block to public safety has now received the support from the White House; the Department of Justice; and the Department of Homeland Security – along with multiple public safety organizations; the “Big 7” (National Governors Association, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, etc.) – the state and local intergovernmental associations; and industry partners such as AT&T and Verizon.
- The time to act is now. Once the spectrum is gone, it gone forever. Congress has the opportunity to ensure that the public safety community has the necessary spectrum needed to build the broadband wireless network. The time for action is now!