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Presidential Memorandum: Unleashing the Wireless Broadband Revolution

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT:Unleashing the Wireless Broadband Revolution

America's future competitiveness and global technology leadership depend, in part, upon the availability of additional spectrum. The world is going wireless, and we must not fall behind. The resurgence of American productivity growth that started in the 1990s largely reflects investments by American companies, the public sector, and citizens in the new communications technologies that are what we know today as the Internet. The Internet, as vital infrastructure, has become central to the daily economic life of almost every American by creating unprecedented opportunities for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. We are now beginning the next transformation in information technology: the wireless broadband revolution.

Few technological developments hold as much potential to enhance America's economic competitiveness, create jobs, and improve the quality of our lives as wireless high-speed access to the Internet. Innovative new mobile technologies hold the promise for a virtuous cycle -- millions of consumers gain faster access to more services at less cost, spurring innovation, and then a new round of consumers benefit from new services. The wireless revolution has already begun with millions of Americans taking advantage of wireless access to the Internet.

Expanded wireless broadband access will trigger the creation of innovative new businesses, provide cost-effective connections in rural areas, increase productivity, improve public safety, and allow for the development of mobile telemedicine, telework, distance learning, and other new applications that will transform Americans' lives.

Spectrum and the new technologies it enables also are essential to the Federal Government, which relies on spectrum for important activities, such as emergency communications, national security, law enforcement, aviation, maritime, space communications, and numerous other Federal functions. Spectrum is also critical for many State, local, and tribal government functions. As the wireless broadband revolution unfolds, innovation can enable efficient and imaginative uses of spectrum to maintain and enhance the Government's capabilities.

In order to achieve mobile wireless broadband's full potential, we need an environment where innovation thrives, and where new capabilities also are secure, trustworthy, and provide appropriate safeguards for users' privacy. These characteristics will continue to be important to the adoption of mobile wireless broadband.

This new era in global technology leadership will only happen if there is adequate spectrum available to support the forthcoming myriad of wireless devices, networks, and applications that can drive the new economy. To do so, we can use our American ingenuity to wring abundance from scarcity, by finding ways to use spectrum more efficiently. We can also unlock the value of otherwise underutilized spectrum and open new avenues for spectrum users to derive value through the development of advanced, situation-aware spectrum-sharing technologies.

I therefore am hereby directing that executive departments, agencies, and offices, and strongly encourage that independent agencies, take the following steps:

Section 1. The Secretary of Commerce, working through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), shall:

(a) collaborate with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to make available a total of 500 MHz of Federal and nonfederal spectrum over the next 10 years, suitable for both mobile and fixed wireless broadband use. The spectrum must be available to be licensed by the FCC for exclusive use or made available for shared access by commercial and Government users in order to enable licensed or unlicensed wireless broadband technologies to be deployed;

(b) collaborate with the FCC to complete by October 1, 2010, a specific Plan and Timetable for identifying and making available 500 MHz of spectrum as described in subsection (a) of this section. For purposes of successfully



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implementing any repurposing of existing spectrum in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, the Plan and Timetable must take into account the need to ensure no loss of critical existing and planned Federal, State, local, and tribal government capabilities, the international implications, and the need for appropriate enforcement mechanisms and authorities;

(c) convene the Policy and Plans Steering Group (PPSG) to advise NTIA on achieving the objectives in subsections (a) and (b) of this section. The Secretaries of Defense, the Treasury, Transportation, State, the Interior, Agriculture, Energy, and Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Administrators of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Federal Aviation Administration, the Director of National Intelligence, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, and the head of any other executive department or agency that is currently authorized to use spectrum shall participate and cooperate fully, or in the case of independent agencies are strongly encouraged to, in the activities of the Department of Commerce in accomplishing subsections (a) and (b) of this section and promptly provide appropriate funding and staff resources for agency support to these efforts and the work of the PPSG; and

(d) submit, not later than 180 days after the Plan and Timetable described in subsection (b) of this section are completed, to the National Economic Council (NEC), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) an interim report to assess progress against the Plan and Timetable developed in accordance with subsection (b) of this section. Additional interim reports shall be submitted 180 days after the submission of the first interim report and then annually thereafter until such time as the Plan and Timetable are completed. In preparing these reports, the Secretary of Commerce shall work cooperatively with the FCC and other relevant departments, agencies, and offices.

Sec. 2. The Director of OMB shall work with the Secretary of Commerce, through NTIA and in consultation with affected departments, agencies, and offices, to incorporate into the Plan and Timetable referred to in section 1(b) of this memorandum adequate funding, incentives, and assistance to enable executive agencies or other affected entities to accomplish the actions specified in section 1(a) of this memorandum.

Sec. 3. The Secretary of Commerce, working through NTIA, in consultation with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, NASA, and other agencies as appropriate, shall create and implement a plan to facilitate research, development, experimentation, and testing by researchers to explore innovative spectrum-sharing technologies, including those that are secure and resilient.

Sec. 4. The FCC is strongly encouraged to work closely with the Department of Commerce, through NTIA, to carry out this memorandum as it relates to the FCC, including the repurposing of nonfederal Government spectrum as appropriate and identifying the mechanisms necessary to ensure compliance with the FCC's decisions.

Sec. 5. The NEC, the OMB, and the OSTP (in consultation with the Department of Commerce, working through NTIA, FCC, and the National Security Staff) shall assess, based on the interim report developed pursuant to section 1(d) of this memorandum, whether there has been sufficient progress in achieving the objectives of this memorandum or whether some other mechanism, such as an independent review panel, is needed to address those areas where sufficient progress is not occurring. The NEC, the OMB, and the OSTP shall make any necessary recommendations to the President regarding such progress 45 days after receiving the initial interim report required by section 1(d) of this memorandum and, as appropriate, following subsequent reports.

Sec. 6.

(a) To the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations, the Department of Commerce, through NTIA, shall provide administrative support for the interagency groups created in this memorandum.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of OMB relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to require the disclosure of classified information, law enforcement sensitive information, or other information that must be protected in the interests of national security.

(d) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(e) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

Sec. 7. The Secretary of Commerce is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

BARACK OBAMA

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