CTIA
Building The Wireless Future℠
Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association

Thomas E. Wheeler
President/CEO

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The Honorable Donald L. Evans
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Thank you for the leadership that you and Assistant Secretary Victory are showing on the important issue of America's shortfall of commercial wireless spectrum.

This is an important consumer issue -- American consumers feel the impact of this shortfall daily. The ability to meet the expanding demand for wireless voice services has been negatively affected by the spectrum shortage, with the result that consumers have begun to express concerns about service quality.

This is an important competitiveness issue -- Beyond voice, the spectrum shortfall also affects the continued leadership of the United States in the next generation of the Internet.

This is an important national security issue – The rest of the world is putting wireless systems in the frequencies used by our military. This has already negatively affected maneuvers and holds the potential to affect America's service men and women in future deployments.

U.S. policymakers must move aggressively to re-establish America's leadership role in the development of wireless capabilities and technologies. Ten years ago, most of the industrialized world made the decision to allocate sufficient spectrum to promote the development of advanced wireless services. Five years ago, Congress directed that 90 MHz of spectrum be allocated for advanced wireless services. Yet over the last five years, the U.S. has failed to allocate and assign a single new MHz of internationally harmonized spectrum for advanced wireless services.

Mr. Secretary, since your confirmation, the wireless industry has worked aggressively with you, and key officials at the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and Congress to achieve a common goal. The industry has been unwavering in its support for a workable solution to this issue that would enhance critical national security and public safety communications requirements, economic growth, and the development of innovative new

products and services for American consumers. A year ago, we advocated that no less than 200 MHz of internationally harmonized spectrum be allocated for the development of advanced wireless services. That plan would have allowed us to reach parity with most of our major competitors around the world by 2010 and protect the interests of the taxpayers.

In October 2001, under your leadership, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the FCC, the Department of Defense and other Executive Branch agencies developed a new plan for the assessment of spectrum for advanced wireless services. The draft NTIA Plan focuses on the potential use of the 1710-1770 and 2110-2170 MHz bands (a total of 120 MHz) for commercial advanced wireless services.

While the NTIA Plan offers significantly less spectrum than the 200 MHz identified as necessary for the United States by the International Telecommunications Union, the wireless industry nevertheless supports it in an effort to be responsive to the post-September 11th realities. It is imperative to get on with this plan for the release of all 120 MHz over time. The impact any further delay would have on consumers and competitiveness would be inexcusable.

President Bush's Budget laid the groundwork for moving forward to modernize both military communications and expand commercial spectrum availability by proposing a spectrum trust fund mechanism. But this creative leadership will be of no practical value if the NTIA Plan does not move forward aggressively.

The Spectrum Summit is an excellent step forward if it produces results. The only successful results can be to set the stage for approval of the 120 MHz NTIA Plan this summer.

Any technical impediments to approval of the NTIA Plan are solvable…The nation's consumers are demanding service at a quality level that demands additional spectrum…The introduction of next generation Internet services requires additional spectrum…The Department of Defense requires modern communications that reflect the spectrum realities in the areas where they will be deployed and allows our troops to train as they fight…Failure to move expeditiously to deliver 120 MHz of internationally harmonized wireless spectrum beginning in 2005 will have serious economic, budgetary and homeland security implications.

To further the considered discussion of the issues surrounding the NTIA Plan and matters raised by the Department of Defense, we submit the attached White Paper for inclusion in the summit's proceedings.

Before you and your Department is an historic opportunity for a multiple win scenario for American consumers, national security, and economic competitiveness. We respectfully urge you to seize upon that opportunity with the utmost dispatch.

Very truly yours,

Thomas E. Wheeler

cc: Honorable Nancy Victory
Honorable Michael Powell
Honorable Condoleeza Rice
Honorable Larry Lindsey
Honorable John Stenbit