

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

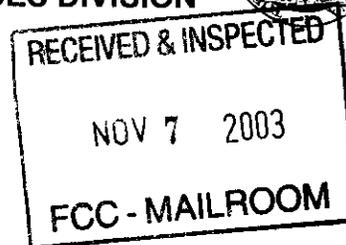


INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION



Judy Martz
Governor

October 31, 2003



Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WT Docket No. 02-55 (Public Safety on 800 Megahertz Band)

Dear Ms Dortch :

On behalf of the State of Montana's Public Safety Services Office, I am writing to ask for your consideration of a significant issue that affects the state of Montana and our nation regarding public safety -- radio interference and interoperability. Commercial wireless operators and public safety agencies both use dedicated channels on the 800 MHz spectrum on interleaved adjacent bands. These technologies operating close together create major problems for our emergency first responders when interference keeps them from communicating via their emergency dispatch radios. The elimination of spectrum interference requires the immediate attention of the FCC.

Having resided in the Rocky Mountain region for over 5 years, reports of serious interference issues have been noted in this region, particularly in the Denver Metro area. These problems will only continue to increase as demand for cellular services rises

Montana faces these issues when cellular carriers begin new operations in the Billings area. This will present the same interference problems confronting other public safety agencies. Montana cities that plan migration to 800 MHz will encounter the same conditions causing dangerous interference that affects public safety agencies across the nation

The FCC is considering a plan to address the predicament of 800 MHz systems licensing. The plan is known as the Consensus Plan and will virtually eliminate this problematic interference, provide much needed additional spectrum for public safety and our first responders, and would provide an underpinning for future expansion.

We support of the Consensus Plan solution and urge the Commission to adopt the plan to solve this life-threatening problem in public safety communications.

Sincerely,

Jerry Hansen, Manager
Public Safety Services Office
State of Montana

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