



April 8, 2004

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: WT Docket No. 02-55

Dear Chairman Powell:

USAction urges the FCC to immediately address and resolve a serious issue that poses a threat to public safety and security in our nation: radio interference in the 800 MHz spectrum band.

USAction is a progressive consumer organization, dedicated to winning social, racial, and economic justice for all. It represents three million members in 34 affiliates, with statewide organizations in 24 states. Our affiliates represent labor, the elderly, civil rights and a range of other organizations.

First responders – many of whom are hardworking union members – place their lives on the line everyday, responding to fires, floods and matters of homeland security. Their ability to arrive quickly to crises is especially critical to seniors who rely more heavily on emergency services. But first responders' timely arrival is contingent upon having reliable and clear communications. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, as reports of public safety radio interference are dramatically on the rise.

As you know, the fundamental cause of this interference is the close proximity and incompatibility of public safety, private wireless, and commercial wireless operations within the 800 MHz band of radio spectrum. Public safety communications is affected significantly since most of their communications infrastructure operates within the 800 MHz band. This is of grave concern to elderly Americans who must rely heavily on first responders in the face of medical emergencies.

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The plan pending before the FCC, that would rearrange first responders' and commercial wireless' radio frequencies without any costs to taxpayers, is our best chance to solve the issue of interference while enhancing public safety and addressing the concerns of senior citizens.

This plan, known as the Consensus Plan, moves proactively to solve public safety radio interference from commercial systems and also provides public safety with additional 800 MHz spectrum, thus reducing congestion.

Inaction threatens the safety of our nation's first responders, and of all Americans. Now is the time for decisive action. Anything less endangers us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Blum", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Blum
Executive Director

