

UTC 2018 Resolution: Encouraging Expanding Access to the 406-420 MHz Band by Energy and Water Service Providers

WHEREAS, the radio portion of the electromagnetic spectrum is needed to enable wireless applications and communications for energy and water service providers, public safety, telecommunications service providers, and much more; and,

WHEREAS, this radio spectrum is divided into "bands" measured by hertz that have different characteristics and properties suitable for various kinds of communications; and,

WHEREAS, energy and water service providers use spectrum to operate the mission-critical infrastructure that powers the U.S. and global economies, including Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), relaying, and grid modernization; and,

WHEREAS, the federal government has access to dedicated spectrum in the 406-420 MHz band, which has available capacity and provides long coverage areas to meet the government's needs; and,

WHEREAS, the demand for spectrum is growing to accommodate expanded use of wireless devices; and,

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission and National Telecommunications and Information Administration are responsible for allocating spectrum efficiently while the proceeds from such allocations are given to the U.S. Treasury; and,

WHEREAS, as recognized by nearly every federal, state and local government agency, energy and water providers are the most critical of all critical industries as they deliver lifesaving and life-sustaining services to all Americans; and,

WHEREAS, the FCC is exploring expanded access to several spectrum bands, including those in which energy and water service providers hold licenses that, in theory, protect them from interference and congestion; and,

WHEREAS, historically, the FCC has expanded access into bands heavily used by energy and water service providers, threatening the reliability of their services and forcing some to relocate into different bands entirely; and,

WHEREAS, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) identified the 406-420 MHz band as a potential location that would be suitable for spectrum sharing by non-governmental operators. Subsequent government reports have indicated that the band is only being used 3-5% during the busiest times of day in the Washington, D.C., area, indicating that it is lightly used; and,

WHEREAS, energy and water service providers require access to interference and congestion-free spectrum, and the 406-420 MHz band contains many of the characteristics necessary to meet these entities' needs; and,

WHEREAS, energy and Water service providers could use this band for data and field force management and voice communications. While each utility would have its unique requirements, utilities could use this band for promoting interoperability during mutual aid and emergency response.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Utilities Technology Council, gathered at its Annual Telecom & Technology Meeting in Palm Springs, California, urges the federal entities responsible for managing the 406-420 MHz band to expand use of the band to energy and water service providers, the most critical of all critical industries.

Adopted by the UTC Membership, May 10, 2018