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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Response/Comment on FCC Docket #24-240

Hello,

I am writing to comment on the NextNav request for modifications to the 900MHz ISM Band and wish to submit the following 5 points for consideration:

1. NextNav's proposal seems to be basing its information regarding use by the amateur radio community on comments submitted by the ARRL 10 years ago. However during the past 10 years, amateur use of the 900MHz ISM band has grown exponentially, especially considering the fact that amateur use is on a secondary basis. I would suggest that NextNav invest some time in researching current usage data instead of relying on stale and invalid data from 10 years ago. To do otherwise renders their request and their stated assessment of negligible impact to amateur use an exercise in deception. This is especially worrisome considering NextNav's stated "commitment" to making sure that all current user concerns are addressed.
2. Giving NextNav the position as the designated "sole nationwide licensee" for this spectrum specifically impedes amateur operations in the 902-928 range due to the 25MHz band split required for amateur repeater operations. The 25MHz split is already only barely possible by using the outer edges (902.x and 927.x) of the spectrum. Use of a smaller 12.5MHz band split was attempted long ago and deemed unsuccessful in this spectrum. The next available option of 25MHz is however sufficient separation and is therefore what is currently in use. This is supported by the fact that the commercial gear designed for the band and used for so many years prior, normally used much larger band splits (ie. 37-39MHz) instead of smaller splits. As the larger splits apparently worked better for the LTR Trunked communications systems of the late 1990s-early 2000s.
3. Repeater gear used today by amateurs for the 900 ISM band is typically a combination of converted commercial equipment and home-grown controller gear, as almost no manufacturer of amateur equipment provides equipment for this band. Therefore many hours have been spent in procuring and modifying the existing equipment already servicing amateur operators in the band. This includes repeaters, controllers, duplexers, isolators, combiners, circulators, bandpass filter cavities, and notch or other filter types, ALL of which have required many man hours for retuning and/or modification for use in the 900 ISM band. The financial costs for having to move these existing operations would be crippling to the community if even possible given the suggested changes.
4. Many states in the northeast US as well as a growing number of states in the south (AZ, TX, FL, AL, LA) and west coast (CA, OR, WA) already have a considerable number of repeaters in the 900MHz range with hundreds of thousands of dollars spent acquiring, converting, and retuning commercial equipment for amateur service. Additionally, conversion of base, mobile and handheld equipment owned and maintained by individual licensed amateur users for accessing those repeaters make assessing the true cost of conversion almost completely impossible. And although it is impossible to gauge conversion costs for end-user equipment, I can assure you it is far from being "free" and/or negligible –especially with our current economic conditions.

There are new repeater sites going into operation constantly, due in no small part to the efforts of new

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Tech Class Licensees who see the lesser inhabited (compared to 2meter and 70cm bands) high frequency bands as quite attractive, allowing for easier exploration and experimentation, much like small segments of the HF bands were long ago for new licensees of the Novice class. The Tech Class interest in this band has been quite interesting and inspiring to witness. So even though only licensed to use the 900 band on a secondary basis, reallocation of this spectrum to NextNav would be showing newly licensed amateurs how their investment into the hobby can be made completely worthless when unjustified –and to some, reckless- reassignment or re-banding occurs just because commercial interests are involved.

5. But finally –and this is just my own observation- It seems as though giving NextNav a solitary nationwide license for the spectrum serves only to create a monopoly of sorts where NextNav would be positioned as the sole licensed provider of spectrum to wireless broadband providers, thereby reaping all of the financial advantages of monopolistic control in the requested spectrum allocation. While this may be allowable in certain allocation bidding/purchasing scenarios, it seems that this type of thing would be better served in spectrum which is not already being utilized by other “public use” primary and secondary users. And unless I misunderstood the request, I believe that even when these sorts of monopolistic control scenarios are allowed, do they not normally begin with various commercial interests bidding against one another for spectrum allocation as cell providers have done in the past —even as far back as analog mobile phone service?

Awarding NextNav with a monopoly hardly seems prudent –much less 'right'- especially on a band already in public use. But putting the band itself aside for the moment, with our nation's government in the financial position of being trillions of dollars in debt, does it make sense to allow NextNav –instead of the FCC directly- to gain financially from the proposed wireless broadband interests? (Because it certainly appears that a NextNav monopoly would materialize if they are allowed to be the nationwide sole licensee in the spectrum. And that's a very handy position to hold, having the ability to both control and financially profit from any and/or all participating wireless broadband service provided).

As well, to my previous point regarding the bidding process, are there no competing companies offering alternate technologies that should be considered or given a chance to compete for spectrum? Because it would seem to be more prudent to select a band segment not already allocated for public use, and open it up for competitive bidding, again much like the cell service companies have done in the past. This would seem to be a more fair –as well as more financially feasible- plan, for both the FCC and also for the taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

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