

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
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November 17, 2009

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro
Acting Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We write today to ask for your assistance with this Committee's ongoing oversight of one of our nation's most precious resources: radiofrequency spectrum. Spectrum is a critical input to the ongoing development of wireless communications technologies and vital to addressing demand for new and innovative wireless services.

Wireless communications and wireless applications have in a short time become crucial to our nation's economic growth and to the well-being of our citizens. In addition to facilitating consumer services, spectrum allows agencies at all levels of government to meet mission-critical functions, such as national defense and public safety. Because of rapidly evolving technologies, it is of critical importance that we review regularly our spectrum management policies, practices, and regulations, to assess whether our national spectrum policy is on target to serve us now and in the future.

Accordingly, we request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine a number of important spectrum issues, including:

- *Federal Spectrum* – federal agency use of assigned spectrum and unlicensed spectrum; the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) measurement and understanding of agency spectrum holding and use; future spectrum needs for agency use; and issues related to reassigning spectrum currently used by agencies to other uses, including reallocation to other federal agencies or for commercial purposes.
- *Commercial Spectrum* – commercial use of assigned spectrum and unlicensed spectrum; the methodology used by NTIA and the Federal Communications Commission to calculate the need for commercial spectrum; current technological trends and projected

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spectrum needs; commercial spectrum that may be underutilized and could potentially be reassigned or reallocated; and the continued use of auctions to assign spectrum.

- *Spectrum sharing* – possible applications of secondary markets to use commercial and/or federal spectrum more efficiently; potential use of smart radios or spectrum-sensing technologies to use commercial and/or federal spectrum more efficiently.

We request that GAO inform the Committee regarding any other issues of concern that it may uncover during its examination of spectrum issues.

Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions about this request, please have your staff contact Shawn Chang of the Committee staff at 202-226-2424.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Chairman



Rick Boucher
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications,
Technology, and the Internet

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member

The Honorable Cliff Stearns
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications,
Technology, and the Internet