



Reallocation of D-Block Spectrum to Public Safety

NASCIO supports the reallocation of the D-Block to public safety and the establishment of regulatory process and structure to construct a national interoperable mobile wireless broadband network that will improve our nation's homeland security and provide first responders with new voice, video, and data communications technologies that are urgently needed. As a strong advocate for enterprise architecture and open standards, NASCIO supports a uniform foundation for public safety communications. Rather than relying on slices of disparate spectrum for public safety, a nationwide architecture is needed to reduce complexity, promote advance services and direct future investments toward true interoperability.

On a daily basis, State Chief Information Officers support public safety activities through the provision of statewide communications infrastructure. Our country's local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement, fire, medical, and other emergency professionals must have access to the most modern and reliable wireless broadband technologies to communicate with each other and with federal officials across agencies and geography during emergencies. The ability for public safety to have seamless nationwide roaming capability on a wireless broadband network that is hardened to public safety requirements is achievable and essential for public safety to meet its ever-increasing responsibilities.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is planning to address this issue again by the disposition of the D-Block via auction. The first attempt by the FCC to auction the spectrum failed miserably. Public safety officials, service providers and infrastructure vendors agree that a more effective method would be to allocate the D-Block directly to public safety organizations in order to create a national broadband network that would meet the critical needs of first responders.

Recommendation: NASCIO supports the reallocation of the D-Block spectrum and the necessary funding for state government and public safety that is critical in building a nationwide wireless broadband network that provides the capacity needed to transmit mission critical real-time high-resolution video, voice and data. Unless Congress passes legislation this year to allocate the D-Block spectrum to public safety, the FCC will auction the spectrum early next year for commercial services. NASCIO urges you to co-sponsor and vote for S.28 and H.R.607 that would allocate the 700-MHZ D-block spectrum to public safety. Our nation cannot afford to miss this one-time-only opportunity.

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