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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2003

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FCC BEGINS INQUIRY REGARDING INTERFERENCE IMMUNITY PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS FOR RECEIVERS

Washington, DC –As part of its ongoing effort to promote efficient use of spectrum, the FCC today issued a Notice of Inquiry (Notice) asking for public comment on the possibility of incorporating receiver interference immunity performance specifications into its spectrum policy on a broader basis. Such specifications could be in the form of incentives, guidelines or regulatory requirements in particular frequency bands, services or across bands and services. Incorporation of receiver performance specifications could serve to promote more efficient utilization of the spectrum and create opportunities for new and additional use of radio communications by the American public. This proceeding builds upon recent work of the Spectrum Policy Task Force, which recommended that the Commission make receiver performance a more prominent part of its spectrum policy.

In the Notice, the Commission observed that a radio receiver's susceptibility to interference is largely dependent on the interference immunity of the device, particularly with regard to its rejection of undesired radiofrequency (RF) energy and signals. It stated that if the receivers used in connection with a radio service are designed to provide a certain immunity or tolerance of undesired RF energy and signals, more efficient and predictable use of the spectrum resource can be achieved, as well as greater opportunities for access to the spectrum. These opportunities could potentially lead to consumer benefits in the form of innovation, competition and choice among services and devices. The Commission further stated that, in recent years, the preemptive effect of minimally performing receivers has been demonstrated, as licensees seek protection for service predicated on the performance of receivers with little tolerance for other signals. Had the expected performance characteristics of those receivers been defined in some way, these services could have been developed with receivers that could better tolerate the introduction of newer services on the same or proximate frequencies.

The Commission stated that it seeks information, comment, and research on issues concerning receivers, specifically:

- immunity performance and interference tolerance of existing receivers
- possibilities for improving the level of receiver immunity in the various radio services
- potential positive and negative impacts of receiver standards on innovation and the marketplace

- possible approaches by which desired levels of receiver immunity or tolerances could be achieved, including incentives for improving performance, voluntary industry standards, mandatory standards, or a combination of these or other approaches
- considerations that should guide the Commission's approach to these matters in the various licensed radio services

In taking this action, the Commission stated that it is not its intent at this time to implement a new regulatory regime that would generally subject all receivers to mandatory standards. Rather, it believes it is preferable to rely primarily on market incentives and voluntary industry programs that provide for flexibility in establishing and managing guidelines for receiver immunity, rather than formal mandatory standards incorporated into the rules.

Action by the Commission March 13, 2003, by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 03-54). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein, with Commissioners Copps, Martin, and Adelstein issuing separate statements.

ET Docket No. 03-65

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