

FCC Seeks Comment on Spectrum for Drones

November 25, 2019

On Monday, November 25, 2019, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice seeking comment on issues related to unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operations in the L-band (960-1164 MHz) and the C-band (5030-5091 MHz) and how licensed, commercial spectrum may be leveraged to support UAS operations. Comments are due December 26, 2019 and reply comments are due January 27, 2020.

Specifically, the FCC seeks comment on:

- Whether UAS operations should be permitted to operate on spectrum in the L-band and the C-band on an unlicensed, shared, or exclusive use basis;
- Any technological, statutory, regulatory, or operational barriers to the use of such spectrum;
- Recommendations of spectrum frequencies that may be appropriate for beyond-visual-line-of-sight operations by UAS; and
- How various spectrum access methods and existing and planned infrastructure might overcome any technological or operational barriers to UAS operations in the L-band or C-band.

The FCC also seeks comment on additional actions it might take to promote the safe and robust use of licensed, commercial spectrum for UAS operations. The FCC notes that numerous studies are underway to determine how existing mobile networks may be leveraged to support low-altitude UAS. The FCC requests information on the UAS applications (e.g. command and control, payload, or telemetry) and deployment scenarios under consideration by wireless service providers and equipment manufacturers at this time, as well

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Practice Areas

Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)

as on the technical issues, including potential interference concerns, they are encountering in direct studies and testing. The FCC requests comment on the potential for interference and solutions to mitigate interference issues as well.

This proceeding arises out of a directive in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and the FCC submit a report on the above spectrum issues to Congress. Comments submitted in this proceeding will inform the final report to Congress.

The Wiley Rein UAS Practice Group has extensive spectrum expertise, particularly with respect to UAS spectrum issues. Please contact the authors of this alert with any questions about this proceeding.