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For Immediate Release

**FCC PROPOSES UPDATES TO WHITE SPACE RULES TO HELP
CLOSE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

***White Space Devices Operate on Vacant TV Channels and Targeted Changes Would
Enable Them to Provide Improved Connectivity for Americans in Rural Areas***

WASHINGTON, February 28, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed targeted changes to its White Space device rules to pave the way for improved broadband coverage for rural Americans. White Space devices operate in portions of the broadcast television bands that are not used by television stations and can be used to provide broadband and other wireless services.

In response to a petition filed by Microsoft Corporation, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposes updates to the Commission’s rules that would allow for more robust service and efficient use of White Space devices particularly in rural areas, without increasing the risk of harmful interference to protected services in the TV bands. These updates would also provide flexibility for these devices to more fully participate in the Internet of Things.

Specifically, the Notice proposes to permit higher transmit power and antenna height above average terrain for fixed White Space devices in less congested geographic areas. If adopted, these changes would allow White Space devices to reach users at greater distances, resulting in better broadband coverage. It would also permit higher power mobile operation within defined geographical areas and revise the rules to provide flexibility for these devices to more fully participate in the Internet of Things.

Additionally, the Commission is seeking comment on methods that could be used to allow higher power operation by White Space devices when adjacent TV channels are occupied.

The action proposed today could provide additional opportunities for unlicensed White Space devices operating in the TV bands and spur continued growth of the White Space device ecosystem, which could provide affordable broadband service to more rural and underserved communities and help close the digital divide.

Action by the Commission February 28, 2020 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 20-17). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving and issuing separate statements.

ET Docket No. 20-36

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