

determined that it is not a "significant energy action" under that order because it is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866 and is not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the supply, distribution, or use of energy. The Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs has not designated it as a significant energy action. Therefore, it does not require a Statement of Energy Effects under Executive Order 13211.

#### Technical Standards

The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) (15 U.S.C. 272 note) directs agencies to use voluntary consensus standards in their regulatory activities unless the agency provides Congress, through the Office of Management and Budget, with an explanation of why using these standards would be inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. Voluntary consensus standards are technical standards (*e.g.*, specifications of materials, performance, design, or operation; test methods; sampling procedures; and related management systems practices) that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies. This rule does not use technical standards. Therefore, we did not consider the use of voluntary consensus standards.

#### Environment

We have analyzed this proposed rule under Commandant Instruction M16475.ID, which guides the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370f), and have concluded that there are no factors in this case that would limit the use of a categorical exclusion under section 2.B.2 of the Instruction. Therefore, this proposed rule is categorically excluded, under figure 2-1, paragraph (34)(g), of the Instruction, from further environmental documentation because it would establish security zones.

A draft "Environmental Analysis Check List" and a draft "Categorical Exclusion Determination" (CED) will be available in the docket where indicated under **ADDRESSES**. Comments on this section will be considered before we make the final decision on whether the rule should be categorically excluded from further environmental review.

#### List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard proposes to amend 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

#### PART 165—REGULATED NAVIGATION AREAS AND LIMITED ACCESS AREAS

1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 33 U.S.C. 1226, 1231; 46 U.S.C. Chapter 701; 50 U.S.C. 191, 195; 33 CFR 1.05-1(g), 6.04-1, 6.04-6, and 160.5; Pub. L. 107-295, 116 Stat. 2064; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1.

2. Add § 165.1199, to read as follows:

#### § 165.1199 Security Zones; Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO), Concord, California.

(a) *Location.* The security zone(s) encompass the navigable waters of Suisun Bay, California, extending from the surface to the sea floor, within 500 yards of the three Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO) piers in Concord, California.

(b) *Regulations.* (1) The Captain of the Port (COTP) San Francisco Bay will enforce the security zone(s) established by this section during military onload or offload operations only upon notice. Upon notice of enforcement by the COTP, entering, transiting through or anchoring in the zone(s) is prohibited unless authorized by the COTP or his designated representative. Upon notice of suspension of enforcement by the COTP, all persons and vessels are granted general permissions to enter, transit, and exit the security zone(s).

(2) If more than 1 pier is involved in onload or offload operations at the same time, the 500-yard security zone for each involved pier will be enforced.

(3) Persons desiring to transit the area of a security zone may contact the Patrol Commander on scene on VHF-FM channel 13 or 16 or the COTP at telephone number 415-399-3547 to seek permission to transit the area. If permission is granted, all persons and vessels must comply with the instructions of the COTP or his designated representative.

(c) *Enforcement.* All persons and vessels must comply with the instructions of the Coast Guard Captain of the Port or the designated on-scene patrol personnel. Patrol personnel comprise commissioned, warrant, and petty officers of the Coast Guard onboard Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary, local, state, and federal law enforcement vessels. The U.S. Coast Guard may be assisted in the patrol and enforcement of the security zones by local law enforcement and the MOTCO police as necessary. Upon being hailed by U.S. Coast Guard patrol personnel by

siren, radio, flashing light, or other means, the operator of a vessel must proceed as directed.

(d) *Notice of enforcement or suspension of enforcement of security zone(s).* The COTP San Francisco Bay will cause notification of enforcement of the security zone(s) to be made by issuing a Local Notice to Mariners and a Broadcast Notice to Mariners to inform the affected segments of the public. During periods that the security zone(s) are being enforced, Coast Guard patrol personnel will notify mariners to keep out of the security zone(s) as they approach the area. In addition, Coast Guard Group San Francisco Bay maintains a telephone line that is maintained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The public can contact Group San Francisco Bay at (415) 399-3530 to obtain information concerning enforcement of this rule. When the security zone(s) are no longer needed, the COTP will cease enforcement of the security zone(s) and issue a Broadcast Notice to Mariners to notify the public. Upon notice of suspension of enforcement, all persons and vessels are granted general permissions to enter, move within and exit the security zone(s).

Dated: September 2, 2004.

**Gerald M. Swanson,**

*Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, San Francisco Bay, California.*

[FR Doc. 04-20544 Filed 9-10-04; 8:45 am]

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#### FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

#### 47 CFR Part 51

[WC Docket No. 04-313, CC Docket No. 01-338; FCC 04-179]

#### Unbundled Access to Network Elements; Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers

**AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) solicits comment on final unbundling rules that will implement the obligations of section 251(c)(3) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, in a manner consistent with the March 2, 2004 decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit (DC Circuit) in *United States Telecom Ass'n v. FCC*. The NPRM poses critical questions concerning how the

Commission might amend its interpretation of “impairment” as that term is used in section 251(d)(2)(B) of the Act, as well as asking how the Commission should respond to other factors when evaluating whether an incumbent carrier must provision a particular network element to competitors on an unbundled basis.

**DATES:** Comments are due on or before October 4, 2004, and reply comments are due on or before October 19, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20554. See

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further filing instructions.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ian Dillner, Attorney, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-1191, or at [Ian.Dillner@fcc.gov](mailto:Ian.Dillner@fcc.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This is a summary of the Commission’s *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in WC Docket No. 04-313 and CC Docket No. 01-338, adopted July 21, 2004, and released August 20, 2004 (NPRM). The complete text of this NPRM is available for inspection and copying during normal business hours in the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW., Room CY-A257, Washington, DC, 20554. This document may also be purchased from the Commission’s duplicating contractor, Best Copy and Printing, Inc., Portals II, 445 12th Street, SW., Room CY-B402, Washington, DC 20554, telephone 1-800-378-3160. It is also available on the Commission’s Web site at <http://www.fcc.gov>.

Comments may be filed using the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies. All filings should refer to WC Docket No. 04-313 and CC Docket No. 01-338. Comments filed through ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet at <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>. Only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, postal service mailing address, and the applicable docket numbers, which in this instance are WC Docket No. 04-313 and CC Docket No. 01-338. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to [ecfshelp@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfshelp@fcc.gov), and should include the following words in the regarding line of the message: “get form<your e-mail address>.” A sample form and directions will be sent in reply.

Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. Parties filing by paper must also send five (5) courtesy copies to the attention of Janice M. Myles, Wireline Competition Bureau, Competition Policy Division, 445 12th Street, SW., Suite 5-C327, Washington, DC 20554, or via e-mail [janice.myles@fcc.gov](mailto:janice.myles@fcc.gov). Paper filings and courtesy copies must be delivered in the following manner. Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail).

The Commission’s contractor, Natek, Inc., will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission’s Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Suite 110, Washington, DC 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building. This facility is the only location where hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings or courtesy copies for the Commission’s Secretary and Commission staff will be accepted. Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. U.S. Postal Service first-class mail, Express Mail, and Priority Mail should be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20554.

All filings must be addressed to the Commission’s Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

Each comment and reply comment must include a short and concise summary of the substantive arguments raised in the pleading. Comments and reply comments must also comply with section 1.48 and all other applicable sections of the Commission’s rules. We direct all interested parties to include the name of the filing party and the date of the filing on each page of their comments and reply comments. All parties are encouraged to utilize a table of contents, regardless of the length of their submission.

### Synopsis of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

1. *Background.* The Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires that incumbent local exchange carriers (LECs) provide unbundled network elements (UNEs) to other telecommunications carriers. In

particular, section 251(c)(3) requires incumbent LECs to provide to requesting telecommunications carriers “nondiscriminatory access to network elements on an unbundled basis at any technically feasible point on rates, terms, and conditions that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory in accordance with . . . the requirements of this section and section 252.” Section 251(d)(2)(B) authorizes the Commission to determine which elements are subject to unbundling. That section directs the Commission to consider, “at a minimum,” whether access to proprietary network elements is “necessary” and whether failure to provide a non-proprietary element on an unbundled basis would “impair” a requesting carrier’s ability to provide service.

2. The Commission has made several attempts to interpret these provisions and to set forth which network elements must be unbundled, and in what circumstances. Most recently, in August 2003, the Commission issued its *Triennial Review Order, Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers, Implementation of the Local Competition Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Deployment of Wireline Services Offering Advanced Telecommunications Capability*, CC Docket Nos. 01-338, 96-98, 98-147, Report and Order and Order on Remand and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 68 FR 52276, Sept. 2, 2003, *vacated and remanded in part, affirmed in part, United States Telecom Association v. FCC*, 359 F.3d 554 (DC Cir. 2004). That order was subsequently vacated and remanded in part by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. *See USTA II*, 359 F.3d 554 (DC Cir. 2004). This NPRM seeks comment on (1) how the Commission might best craft appropriate and sustainable unbundling policies in light of the DC Circuit’s decision and, (2) appropriate transition mechanisms to govern unbundled access to network elements in the event the Commission determines that particular elements are not subject to the section 251(c)(3) unbundling requirement.

3. *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.* First, the Commission seeks comment on how to respond to the DC Circuit’s *USTA II* decision in establishing sustainable new unbundling rules under sections 251(c) and 251(d)(2) of the Act. As an initial matter, the document seeks comment on what changes to the Commission’s unbundling framework are necessary, given the guidance of the *USTA II* court. To that end, the

Commission seeks comment on how various incumbent LEC service offerings and obligations, such as tariffed offerings and Bell Operating Company (BOC) access obligations under section 271, fit into the Commission's unbundling framework. Moreover, we seek comment on how best to define relevant markets (e.g., product markets, geographic markets, customer classes) to develop rules that account for market variability and to conduct the service-specific inquiry to which *USTA II* refers. Also, the Commission seeks comment on how to respond to the DC Circuit's guidance on other threshold factors, including the relationship between universal service support and the provision of UNEs.

4. Moving beyond the threshold unbundling issues, the NPRM seeks comment on how to apply the Commission's unbundling framework to make determinations on access to individual network elements. Thus, we seek comment on which specific network elements the Commission should require incumbent LECs to make available as UNEs, and how the Commission should make these determinations. Further, the Commission invites parties to comment on any other issues it should address in light of *USTA II*.

5. The NPRM also seeks comment regarding the second phase of the twelve-month transition plan described in the simultaneously released Order, summarized separately. The first phase of this plan is designed to ensure the continued availability of unbundled switching, dedicated transport and enterprise market loops over the next six months. The second phase is meant to mitigate the disruption that might otherwise ensue in the absence of a Commission finding that any or all of those elements are subject to unbundling. The NPRM seeks comment on whether additional transition mechanisms apart from or beyond this second phase are appropriate. For example, we seek comment on what additional transition mechanisms, if any, would help to prevent service disruptions during cut-overs from UNE facilities to a carrier's own (or third-party) facilities, or for conversions to tariffed or other service arrangements.

#### **Paperwork Reduction Act**

This NPRM does not contain proposed information collection(s) subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), Public Law 104-13. In addition, therefore, it does not contain any proposed "information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees," pursuant to

the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, Public Law 107-198, *see* 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(4).

#### **Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis**

6. As required by the RFA, the Commission has prepared this IRFA of the possible significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities by the policies and rules proposed in this NPRM. Written public comments are sought on this IRFA. Comments must be identified as responses to the IRFA and must be filed by the deadlines for comments on the NPRM. The Commission will send a copy of the NPRM, including this IRFA, to the Chief Counsel for SBA Advocacy.

##### *A. Need for, and Objectives of, the Proposed Rule*

7. We initiate this proceeding to begin a comprehensive examination of the circumstances under which incumbent LECs must make UNEs available to requesting carriers pursuant to sections 251(c)(3) and 251(d)(2) of the Act. The Commission last reviewed its unbundling rules comprehensively in 2003 in the Triennial Review Order. Portions of the Triennial Review Order were vacated and/or remanded by the DC Circuit in its *USTA II* decision. The NPRM seeks comment on how the Commission should respond to the DC Circuit's opinion, both in terms of creating a legally sustainable impairment standard and applying that standard to individual network elements.

##### *B. Legal Basis*

8. The legal basis for any action that may be taken pursuant to the NPRM is contained in sections 1, 3, 4, 201-205, 251, 256, 271, 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 151, 153, 154, 201-205, 251, 252, 256, 271, 303(r).

##### *C. Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities To Which the Proposed Rules Would Apply*

9. The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of, and, where feasible, an estimate of, the number of small entities that may be affected by the rules adopted herein. The RFA generally defines the term "small entity" as having the same meaning as the terms "small business," "small organization," and "small governmental jurisdiction." In addition, the term "small business" has the same meaning as the term "small business concern" under the Small Business Act. A "small business concern" is one which: (1) is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation;

and (3) satisfies any additional criteria established by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

10. In this section, we further describe and estimate the number of small entity licensees and regulatees that may be affected by our action. The most reliable source of information regarding the total numbers of certain common carrier and related providers nationwide, as well as the number of commercial wireless entities, appears to be the data that the Commission publishes in its Trends in Telephone Service report. The SBA has developed small business size standards for wireline and wireless small businesses within the three commercial census categories of Wired Telecommunications Carriers, Paging, and Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications. Under these categories, a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. Below, using the above size standards and others, we discuss the total estimated numbers of small businesses that might be affected by our actions.

11. We have included small incumbent local exchange carriers in this present RFA analysis. As noted above, a "small business" under the RFA is one that, *inter alia*, meets the pertinent small business size standard (e.g., a telephone communications business having 1,500 or fewer employees), and "is not dominant in its field of operation." The SBA's Office of Advocacy contends that, for RFA purposes, small incumbent local exchange carriers are not dominant in their field of operation because any such dominance is not "national" in scope. We have therefore included small incumbent local exchange carriers in this RFA analysis, although we emphasize that this RFA action has no effect on Commission analyses and determinations in other, non-RFA contexts.

12. *Wired Telecommunications Carriers.* The SBA has developed a small business size standard for Wired Telecommunications Carriers, which consists of all such companies having 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Census Bureau data for 1997, there were 2,225 firms in this category, total, that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 2,201 firms had employment of 999 or fewer employees, and an additional 24 firms had employment of 1,000 employees or more. Thus, under this size standard, the great majority of firms can be considered small.

13. *Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (LECs).* Neither the Commission nor the SBA has developed a small business size standard specifically for incumbent local exchange services. The

appropriate size standard under SBA rules is for the category Wired Telecommunications Carriers. Under that size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission data, 1,310 carriers have reported that they are engaged in the provision of incumbent local exchange services. Of these 1,310 carriers, an estimated 1,025 have 1,500 or fewer employees and 285 have more than 1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that most providers of incumbent local exchange service are small businesses that may be affected by our proposed action.

14. *Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs), Competitive Access Providers (CAPs), "Shared-Tenant Service Providers," and "Other Local Service Providers."* Neither the Commission nor the SBA has developed a small business size standard specifically for these service providers. The appropriate size standard under SBA rules is for the category Wired Telecommunications Carriers. Under that size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission data, 563 carriers have reported that they are engaged in the provision of either competitive access provider services or competitive local exchange carrier services. Of these 563 carriers, an estimated 472 have 1,500 or fewer employees and 91 have more than 1,500 employees. In addition, 14 carriers have reported that they are "Shared-Tenant Service Providers," and all 14 are estimated to have 1,500 or fewer employees. In addition, 37 carriers have reported that they are "Other Local Service Providers." Of the 37, an estimated 36 have 1,500 or fewer employees and one has more than 1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that most providers of competitive local exchange service, competitive access providers, "Shared-Tenant Service Providers," and "Other Local Service Providers" are small entities that may be affected by our proposed action.

15. *Interexchange Carriers (IXCs).* Neither the Commission nor the SBA has developed a small business size standard specifically for providers of interexchange services. The appropriate size standard under SBA rules is for the category Wired Telecommunications Carriers. Under that size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission data, 281 carriers have reported that they are engaged in the provision of interexchange service. Of these, an estimated 254 have 1,500 or fewer employees and 27 have more than

1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that the majority of IXCs are small entities that may be affected by our proposed action.

16. *Operator Service Providers (OSPs).* Neither the Commission nor the SBA has developed a small business size standard specifically for operator service providers. The appropriate size standard under SBA rules is for the category Wired Telecommunications Carriers. Under that size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission data, 23 carriers have reported that they are engaged in the provision of operator services. Of these, an estimated 22 have 1,500 or fewer employees and one has more than 1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that the majority of OSPs are small entities that may be affected by our proposed action. Prepaid Calling Card Providers. The SBA has developed a size standard for a small business within the category of Telecommunications Resellers. Under that SBA size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission data, 32 companies reported that they were engaged in the provision of prepaid calling cards. Of these 32 companies, an estimated 31 have 1,500 or fewer employees and one has more than 1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that the great majority of prepaid calling card providers are small entities that may be affected by the rules and policies adopted herein.

17. *Other Toll Carriers.* Neither the Commission nor the SBA has developed a size standard for small businesses specifically applicable to "Other Toll Carriers." This category includes toll carriers that do not fall within the categories of interexchange carriers, OSPs, prepaid calling card providers, satellite service carriers, or toll resellers. The closest applicable size standard under SBA rules is for Wired Telecommunications Carriers. Under that size standard, such a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. According to Commission's data, 65 companies reported that their primary telecommunications service activity was the provision of other toll services. Of these 65 companies, an estimated 62 have 1,500 or fewer employees and three have more than 1,500 employees. Consequently, the Commission estimates that most "Other Toll Carriers" are small entities that may be affected by the rules and policies adopted herein.

18. *Wireless Service Providers.* The SBA has developed a small business

size standard for wireless firms within the two broad economic census categories of "Paging" and "Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications." Under both SBA categories, a wireless business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. For the census category of Paging, Census Bureau data for 1997 show that there were 1,320 firms in this category, total, that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 1,303 firms had employment of 999 or fewer employees, and an additional 17 firms had employment of 1,000 employees or more. Thus, under this category and associated small business size standard, the great majority of firms can be considered small. For the census category Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications, Census Bureau data for 1997 show that there were 977 firms in this category, total, that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 965 firms had employment of 999 or fewer employees, and an additional 12 firms had employment of 1,000 employees or more. Thus, under this second category and size standard, the great majority of firms can, again, be considered small. Broadband PCS. The broadband PCS spectrum is divided into six frequency blocks designated A through F, and the Commission has held auctions for each block. The Commission defined "small entity" for Blocks C and F as an entity that has average gross revenues of \$40 million or less in the three previous calendar years. For Block F, an additional classification for "very small business" was added and is defined as an entity that, together with its affiliates, has average gross revenues of not more than \$15 million for the preceding three calendar years." These standards defining "small entity" in the context of broadband PCS auctions have been approved by the SBA. No small businesses, within the SBA-approved small business size standards bid successfully for licenses in Blocks A and B. There were 90 winning bidders that qualified as small entities in the Block C auctions. A total of 93 small and very small business bidders won approximately 40 percent of the 1,479 licenses for Blocks D, E, and F. On March 23, 1999, the Commission re-auctioned 347 C, D, E, and F Block licenses. There were 48 small business winning bidders. On January 26, 2001, the Commission completed the auction of 422 C and F Broadband PCS licenses in Auction No. 35. Of the 35 winning bidders in this auction, 29 qualified as "small" or "very small" businesses. Subsequent events, concerning Auction 305, including judicial and agency

determinations, resulted in a total of 163 C and F Block licenses being available for grant. In addition, we note that, as a general matter, the number of winning bidders that qualify as small businesses at the close of an auction does not necessarily represent the number of small businesses currently in service. Also, the Commission does not generally track subsequent business size unless, in the context of assignments or transfers, unjust enrichment issues are implicated.

19. *Narrowband Personal Communications Services.* The Commission held an auction for Narrowband PCS licenses that commenced on July 25, 1994, and closed on July 29, 1994. A second auction commenced on October 26, 1994 and closed on November 8, 1994. For purposes of the first two Narrowband PCS auctions, "small businesses" were entities with average gross revenues for the prior three calendar years of \$40 million or less. Through these auctions, the Commission awarded a total of 41 licenses, 11 of which were obtained by four small businesses. To ensure meaningful participation by small business entities in future auctions, the Commission adopted a two-tiered small business size standard in the Narrowband PCS Second Report and Order, 65 FR 35875, Jun. 6, 2000. A "small business" is an entity that, together with affiliates and controlling interests, has average gross revenues for the three preceding years of not more than \$40 million. A "very small business" is an entity that, together with affiliates and controlling interests, has average gross revenues for the three preceding years of not more than \$15 million. The SBA has approved these small business size standards. A third auction commenced on October 3, 2001 and closed on October 16, 2001. Here, five bidders won 317 (Metropolitan Trading Areas and nationwide) licenses. Three of these claimed status as a small or very small entity and won 311 licenses.

20. *220 MHz Radio Service—Phase I Licensees.* The 220 MHz service has both Phase I and Phase II licenses. Phase I licensing was conducted by lotteries in 1992 and 1993. There are approximately 1,515 such non nationwide licensees and four nationwide licensees currently authorized to operate in the 220 MHz band. The Commission has not developed a definition of small entities specifically applicable to such incumbent 220 MHz Phase I licensees. To estimate the number of such licensees that are small businesses, we apply the small business size standard

under the SBA rules applicable to "Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications" companies. This category provides that a small business is a wireless company employing no more than 1,500 persons. According to the Census Bureau data for 1997, only twelve firms out of a total of 1,238 such firms that operated for the entire year in 1997, had 1,000 or more employees. If this general ratio continues in the context of Phase I 220 MHz licensees, the Commission estimates that nearly all such licensees are small businesses under the SBA's small business standard.

21. *220 MHz Radio Service—Phase II Licensees.* The 220 MHz service has both Phase I and Phase II licenses. The Phase II 220 MHz service is a new service, and is subject to spectrum auctions. In the 220 MHz Third Report and Order, 62 FR 16004 Apr. 3, 1997, we adopted a small business size standard for defining "small" and "very small" businesses for purposes of determining their eligibility for special provisions such as bidding credits and installment payments. This small business standard indicates that a "small business" is an entity that, together with its affiliates and controlling principals, has average gross revenues not exceeding \$15 million for the preceding three years. A "very small business" is defined as an entity that, together with its affiliates and controlling principals, has average gross revenues that do not exceed \$3 million for the preceding three years. The SBA has approved these small size standards. Auctions of Phase II licenses commenced on September 15, 1998, and closed on October 22, 1998. In the first auction, 908 licenses were auctioned in three different-sized geographic areas: three nationwide licenses, 30 Regional Economic Area Group (EAG) Licenses, and 875 Economic Area (EA) Licenses. Of the 908 licenses auctioned, 693 were sold. Thirty-nine small businesses won 373 licenses in the first 220 MHz auction. A second auction included 225 licenses: 216 EA licenses and 9 EAG licenses. Fourteen companies claiming small business status won 158 licenses. A third auction included four licenses: 2 BEA licenses and 2 EAG licenses in the 220 MHz Service. No small or very small business won any of these licenses.

22. *Specialized Mobile Radio.* The Commission awards "small entity" bidding credits in auctions for Specialized Mobile Radio (SMR) geographic area licenses in the 800 MHz and 900 MHz bands to firms that had revenues of no more than \$15 million in each of the three previous calendar

years. The Commission awards "very small entity" bidding credits to firms that had revenues of no more than \$3 million in each of the three previous calendar years. The SBA has approved these small business size standards for the 900 MHz Service. The Commission has held auctions for geographic area licenses in the 800 MHz and 900 MHz bands. The 900 MHz SMR auction began on December 5, 1995, and closed on April 15, 1996. Sixty bidders claiming that they qualified as small businesses under the \$15 million size standard won 263 geographic area licenses in the 900 MHz SMR band. The 800 MHz SMR auction for the upper 200 channels began on October 28, 1997, and was completed on December 8, 1997. Ten bidders claiming that they qualified as small businesses under the \$15 million size standard won 38 geographic area licenses for the upper 200 channels in the 800 MHz SMR band. A second auction for the 800 MHz band was held on January 10, 2002 and closed on January 17, 2002 and included 23 BEA licenses. One bidder claiming small business status won five licenses.

23. *Common Carrier Paging.* The SBA has developed a small business size standard for wireless firms within the broad economic census categories of "Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications." Under this SBA category, a wireless business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. For the census category of Paging, Census Bureau data for 1997 show that there were 1,320 firms in this category, total, that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 1,303 firms had employment of 999 or fewer employees, and an additional 17 firms had employment of 1,000 employees or more. Thus, under this category and associated small business size standard, the great majority of firms can be considered small.

24. In the Paging Second Report and Order, 62 FR 11616, Mar. 12, 1997, the Commission adopted a size standard for "small businesses" for purposes of determining their eligibility for special provisions such as bidding credits and installment payments. A small business is an entity that, together with its affiliates and controlling principals, has average gross revenues not exceeding \$15 million for the preceding three years. The SBA has approved this definition. An auction of Metropolitan Economic Area (MEA) licenses commenced on February 24, 2000, and closed on March 2, 2000. Of the 2,499 licenses auctioned, 985 were sold. Fifty-seven companies claiming small business status won 440 licenses. An auction of MEA and Economic Area

(EA) licenses commenced on October 30, 2001, and closed on December 5, 2001. Of the 15,514 licenses auctioned, 5,323 were sold. One hundred thirty-two companies claiming small business status purchased 3,724 licenses. A third auction, consisting of 8,874 licenses in each of 175 EAs and 1,328 licenses in all but three of the 51 MEAs commenced on May 13, 2003, and closed on May 28, 2003. Seventy-seven bidders claiming small or very small business status won 2,093 licenses. Currently, there are approximately 74,000 Common Carrier Paging licenses. According to the most recent Trends in Telephone Service, 379 private and common carriers reported that they were engaged in the provision of either paging or "other mobile" services. Of these, we estimate that 373 are small, under the SBA-approved small business size standard. We estimate that the majority of common carrier paging providers would qualify as small entities under the SBA definition.

25. *700 MHz Guard Band Licenses.* In the 700 MHz Guard Band Order, we adopted size standards for "small businesses" and "very small businesses" for purposes of determining their eligibility for special provisions such as bidding credits and installment payments. A small business in this service is an entity that, together with its affiliates and controlling principals, has average gross revenues not exceeding \$40 million for the preceding three years. Additionally, a very small business is an entity that, together with its affiliates and controlling principals, has average gross revenues that are not more than \$15 million for the preceding three years. SBA approval of these definitions is not required. An auction of 52 Major Economic Area (MEA) licenses commenced on September 6, 2000, and closed on September 21, 2000. Of the 104 licenses auctioned, 96 licenses were sold to nine bidders. Five of these bidders were small businesses that won a total of 26 licenses. A second auction of 700 MHz Guard Band licenses commenced on February 13, 2001, and closed on February 21, 2001. All eight of the licenses auctioned were sold to three bidders. One of these bidders was a small business that won a total of two licenses. Rural Radiotelephone Service. The Commission has not adopted a size standard for small businesses specific to the Rural Radiotelephone Service. A significant subset of the Rural Radiotelephone Service is the BETRS. The Commission uses the SBA's small business size standard applicable to

Telecommunications," *i.e.*, an entity employing no more than 1,500 persons. There are approximately 1,000 licensees in the Rural Radiotelephone Service, and the Commission estimates that there are 1,000 or fewer small entity licensees in the Rural Radiotelephone Service that may be affected by the rules and policies adopted herein.

26. *Air-Ground Radiotelephone Service.* The Commission has not adopted a small business size standard specific to the Air-Ground Radiotelephone Service. We will use SBA's small business size standard applicable to "Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications," *i.e.*, an entity employing no more than 1,500 persons. There are approximately 100 licensees in the Air-Ground Radiotelephone Service, and we estimate that almost all of them qualify as small under the SBA small business size standard.

27. *Aviation and Marine Radio Services.* Small businesses in the aviation and marine radio services use a very high frequency (VHF) marine or aircraft radio and, as appropriate, an emergency position-indicating radio beacon (and/or radar) or an emergency locator transmitter. The Commission has not developed a small business size standard specifically applicable to these small businesses. For purposes of this analysis, the Commission uses the SBA small business size standard for the category "Cellular and Other Telecommunications," which is 1,500 or fewer employees. Most applicants for recreational licenses are individuals. Approximately 581,000 ship station licensees and 131,000 aircraft station licensees operate domestically and are not subject to the radio carriage requirements of any statute or treaty. For purposes of our evaluations in this analysis, we estimate that there are up to approximately 712,000 licensees that are small businesses (or individuals) under the SBA standard. In addition, between December 3, 1998 and December 14, 1998, the Commission held an auction of 42 VHF Public Coast licenses in the 157.1875–157.4500 MHz (ship transmit) and 161.775–162.0125 MHz (coast transmit) bands. For purposes of the auction, the Commission defined a "small" business as an entity that, together with controlling interests and affiliates, has average gross revenues for the preceding three years not to exceed \$15 million dollars. In addition, a "very small" business is one that, together with controlling interests and affiliates, has average gross revenues for the preceding three years not to exceed \$3 million dollars. There are approximately 10,672

licensees in the Marine Coast Service, and the Commission estimates that almost all of them qualify as "small" businesses under the above special small business size standards.

28. *Fixed Microwave Services.* Fixed microwave services include common carrier, private operational-fixed, and broadcast auxiliary radio services. At present, there are approximately 22,015 common carrier fixed licensees and 61,670 private operational-fixed licensees and broadcast auxiliary radio licensees in the microwave services. The Commission has not created a size standard for a small business specifically with respect to fixed microwave services. For purposes of this analysis, the Commission uses the SBA small business size standard for the category "Cellular and Other Telecommunications," which is 1,500 or fewer employees. The Commission does not have data specifying the number of these licensees that have more than 1,500 employees, and thus are unable at this time to estimate with greater precision the number of fixed microwave service licensees that would qualify as small business concerns under the SBA's small business size standard. Consequently, the Commission estimates that there are up to 22,015 common carrier fixed licensees and up to 61,670 private operational-fixed licensees and broadcast auxiliary radio licensees in the microwave services that may be small and may be affected by the rules and policies proposed herein. We noted, however, that the common carrier microwave fixed licensee category includes some large entities.

29. *Offshore Radiotelephone Service.* This service operates on several ultra high frequencies (UHF) television broadcast channels that are not used for television broadcasting in the coastal areas of states bordering the Gulf of Mexico. There are presently approximately 55 licensees in this service. We are unable to estimate at this time the number of licensees that would qualify as small under the SBA's small business size standard for "Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications" services. Under that SBA small business size standard, a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees.

30. *Wireless Communications Services.* This service can be used for fixed, mobile, radiolocation, and digital audio broadcasting satellite uses. The Commission defined "small business" for the wireless communications services (WCS) auction as an entity with average gross revenues of \$40 million for each of the three preceding years,

and a “very small business” as an entity with average gross revenues of \$15 million for each of the three preceding years. The SBA has approved these definitions. The Commission auctioned geographic area licenses in the WCS service. In the auction, which commenced on April 15, 1997 and closed on April 25, 1997, there were seven bidders that won 31 licenses that qualified as very small business entities, and one bidder that won one license that qualified as a small business entity. An auction for one license in the 1670–1674 MHz band commenced on April 30, 2003 and closed the same day. One license was awarded. The winning bidder was not a small entity.

31. *39 GHz Service.* The Commission created a special small business size standard for 39 GHz licenses—an entity that has average gross revenues of \$40 million or less in the three previous calendar years. An additional size standard for “very small business” is: an entity that, together with affiliates, has average gross revenues of not more than \$15 million for the preceding three calendar years. The SBA has approved these small business size standards. The auction of the 2,173 39 GHz licenses began on April 12, 2000 and closed on May 8, 2000. The 18 bidders who claimed small business status won 849 licenses. Consequently, the Commission estimates that 18 or fewer 39 GHz licensees are small entities that may be affected by the rules and policies proposed herein.

32. *Multipoint Distribution Service, Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service, and Instructional Television Fixed Service.* Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) systems, often referred to as “wireless cable,” transmit video programming to subscribers using the microwave frequencies of the Multipoint Distribution Service (MDS) and Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS). In connection with the 1996 MDS auction, the Commission defined “small business” as an entity that, together with its affiliates, has average gross annual revenues that are not more than \$40 million for the preceding three calendar years. The SBA has approved of this standard. The MDS auction resulted in 67 successful bidders obtaining licensing opportunities for 493 Basic Trading Areas (BTAs). Of the 67 auction winners, 61 claimed status as a small business. At this time, we estimate that of the 61 small business MDS auction winners, 48 remain small business licensees. In addition to the 48 small businesses that hold BTA authorizations, there are approximately 392 incumbent MDS licensees that have

gross revenues that are not more than \$40 million and are thus considered small entities.

33. In addition, the SBA has developed a small business size standard for Cable and Other Program Distribution, which includes all such companies generating \$12.5 million or less in annual receipts. According to Census Bureau data for 1997, there were a total of 1,311 firms in this category, total, that had operated for the entire year. Of this total, 1,180 firms had annual receipts of under \$10 million, and an additional 52 firms had receipts of \$10 million or more but less than \$25 million. Consequently, we estimate that the majority of providers in this service category are small businesses that may be affected by the proposed rules and policies.

34. Finally, while SBA approval for a Commission-defined small business size standard applicable to ITFS is pending, educational institutions are included in this analysis as small entities. There are currently 2,032 ITFS licensees, and all but 100 of these licenses are held by educational institutions. Thus, we tentatively conclude that at least 1,932 ITFS licensees are small businesses.

35. *Local Multipoint Distribution Service.* Local Multipoint Distribution Service (LMDS) is a fixed broadband point-to-multipoint microwave service that provides for two-way video telecommunications. The auction of the 986 Local Multipoint Distribution Service (LMDS) licenses began on February 18, 1998 and closed on March 25, 1998. The Commission established a small business size standard for LMDS licenses as an entity that has average gross revenues of less than \$40 million in the three previous calendar years. An additional small business size standard for “very small business” was added as an entity that, together with its affiliates, has average gross revenues of not more than \$15 million for the preceding three calendar years. The SBA has approved these small business size standards in the context of LMDS auctions. There were 93 winning bidders that qualified as small entities in the LMDS auctions. A total of 93 small and very small business bidders won approximately 277 A Block licenses and 387 B Block licenses. On March 27, 1999, the Commission re-auctioned 161 licenses; there were 32 small and very small businesses bidding that won 119 licenses.

36. *218–219 MHz Service.* The first auction of 218–219 MHz (previously referred to as the Interactive and Video Data Service or IVDS) spectrum resulted in 178 entities winning licenses for 594 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

Of the 594 licenses, 567 were won by 167 entities qualifying as a small business. For that auction, we defined a small business as an entity that, together with its affiliates, has no more than a \$6 million net worth and, after federal income taxes (excluding any carry over losses), has no more than \$2 million in annual profits each year for the previous two years. In the 218–219 MHz Report and Order and Memorandum Opinion and Order, we defined a small business as an entity that, together with its affiliates and persons or entities that hold interests in such an entity and their affiliates, has average annual gross revenues not exceeding \$15 million for the preceding three years. A very small business is defined as an entity that, together with its affiliates and persons or entities that hold interests in such an entity and its affiliates, has average annual gross revenues not exceeding \$3 million for the preceding three years. The SBA has approved of these definitions. At this time, we cannot estimate the number of licenses that will be won by entities qualifying as small or very small businesses under our rules in future auctions of 218–219 MHz spectrum. Given the success of small businesses in the previous auction, and the prevalence of small businesses in the subscription television services and message communications industries, we assume for purposes of this analysis that in future auctions, many, and perhaps all, of the licenses may be awarded to small businesses.

37. *Incumbent 24 GHz Licensees.* This analysis may affect incumbent licensees who were relocated to the 24 GHz band from the 18 GHz band, and applicants who wish to provide services in the 24 GHz band. The applicable SBA small business size standard is that of “Cellular and Other Wireless Telecommunications” companies. This category provides that such a company is small if it employs no more than 1,500 persons. According to Census Bureau data for 1997, there were 977 firms in this category, total, that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 965 firms had employment of 999 or fewer employees, and an additional 12 firms had employment of 1,000 employees or more. Thus, under this size standard, the great majority of firms can be considered small. These broader census data notwithstanding, we believe that there are only two licensees in the 24 GHz band that were relocated from the 18 GHz band, Teligent and TRW, Inc. It is our understanding that Teligent and its related companies have less than 1,500 employees, though this may change in the future. TRW is not a small

entity. Thus, only one incumbent licensee in the 24 GHz band is a small business entity.

38. *Future 24 GHz Licensees.* With respect to new applicants in the 24 GHz band, we have defined "small business" as an entity that, together with controlling interests and affiliates, has average annual gross revenues for the three preceding years not exceeding \$15 million. "Very small business" in the 24 GHz band is defined as an entity that, together with controlling interests and affiliates, has average gross revenues not exceeding \$3 million for the preceding three years. The SBA has approved these definitions. The Commission will not know how many licensees will be small or very small businesses until the auction, if required, is held.

39. *Internet Service Providers.* The SBA has developed a small business size standard for Internet Service Providers. This category comprises establishments "primarily engaged in providing direct access through telecommunications networks to computer-held information compiled or published by others." Under the SBA size standard, such a business is small if it has average annual receipts of \$21 million or less. According to Census Bureau data for 1997, there were 2,751 firms in this category that operated for the entire year. Of these, 2,659 firms had annual receipts of under \$10 million, and an additional 67 firms had receipts of between \$10 million and \$24,999,999. Thus, under this size standard, the great majority of firms can be considered small entities.

#### *D. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements for Small Entities*

40. In this NPRM, we seek comment on proposed rules that would establish unbundling requirements for incumbent LECs, pursuant to sections 251(c) and 251(d)(2) of the Act. The Commission last reviewed its unbundling rules comprehensively in 2003 in the Triennial Review Order. Portions of the Triennial Review Order were vacated and/or remanded by the DC Circuit in its *USTA II* decision. The NPRM seeks comment on how the Commission should respond to the DC Circuit's opinion, in terms of both how to create a legally sustainable impairment standard, as well as applying that standard to individual network elements.

#### *E. Steps Taken To Minimize Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities, and Significant Alternatives Considered*

41. The RFA requires an agency to describe any significant alternatives that

it has considered in developing its approach, which may include the following four alternatives (among others): "(1) The establishment of differing compliance or reporting requirements or timetables that take into account the resources available to small entities; (2) the clarification, consolidation, or simplification of compliance and reporting requirements under the rule for such small entities; (3) the use of performance rather than design standards; and (4) an exemption from coverage of the rule, or any part thereof, for such small entities."

42. In this NPRM, we seek comment on how to develop legally sustainable rules for access to unbundled network elements. We seek comment, for instance, on how best to define markets, including product markets and customer classes. We also wish to solicit comment on the economic effect that various UNE approaches might have on small entity telecommunications providers.

#### *F. Federal Rules That May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rule*

43. None.

#### **Ordering Clause**

Accordingly, it is ordered that the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is adopted.

Federal Communications Commission.

**William F. Caton,**

*Deputy Secretary*

[FR Doc. 04-20467 Filed 9-10-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6712-01-P**

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## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **50 CFR Part 224**

[I.D. 040704A]

#### **Endangered Fish and Wildlife; Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) for Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction; Extension of Public Comment Period**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice to extend public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is extending the public comment period on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) published June 1, 2004. The ANPR

announces a strategy to reduce mortalities to North Atlantic right whales as a result of vessel collisions. NMFS is extending the public comment period through November 15, 2004, to allow for adequate time to conduct stakeholder meetings along the Atlantic coast in association with the ANPR comment period.

**DATES:** Written and electronic comments on the ANPR must be received (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. eastern standard time on November 15, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be sent to:

- Mail: Chief, Marine Mammal Conservation Division, Attn: Right Whale Ship Strike Strategy, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

- Fax: (301)427-2522, Attn: Right Whale Ship Strike Strategy.

- E-mail:

[shipstrike.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:shipstrike.comments@noaa.gov).

- Federal Rulemaking portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> (follow instructions for submitting comments).

The June 1, 2004, ANPR may be obtained at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/) under the "Recent News and Hot Topics" link. Using the drop-down menu, the link "Ship Strike Strategy" provides access to the ANPR, as well as links to background and supporting documentation related to the proposed strategy.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Michael Payne, Division Chief, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at (301) 713-2322; Pat Gerrior, Fishery Biologist, Northeast Regional Office, NMFS, at (508) 495-2264; or Barb Zoodsma, Fishery Biologist, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, at (904) 321-2806.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice provides additional opportunity for public involvement in the development and implementation of a strategy to reduce the likelihood and threat of ship strike mortalities to North Atlantic right whales. The strategy is described in greater detail in the ANPR published June 1, 2004 (69 FR 30857). In summary, it is a multi-faceted plan that includes potential routing changes, speed reductions, and the use of dynamic management areas as proposed operational measures.

NMFS has already held five public meetings (Boston, MA; Jersey City, NJ; Wilmington, NC; Jacksonville, FL; and Silver Spring, MD) in July and August 2004 to present the strategy and solicit information on the development and implementation of the proposed new operational measures. The agency is extending the comment period through