



Select Spectrum and Access Spectrum Announce Upper 700 MHz A Block Becomes Official 4G/5G NB-IoT Band 103

3GPP Grants New Status to the 700 MHz A Block

McLean, VA - April 19, 2022 – Today, Select Spectrum and Access Spectrum announced that the Upper 700 MHz A Block has been given a new official status: “NB-IoT Band 103” for 4G and 5G services. Following successful deployments, the request to recognize the A Block was introduced into the 3GPP standards association approval process in early 2021 and approved at the RAN Plenary meeting in March 2022. The change has now been codified into the official 4G and 5G 3GPP Technical Specifications.

Robert Finch, President of Select Spectrum commented, “The Upper 700 MHz A Block is already utilized by more than 20 utilities and other critical infrastructure organizations, and products from 14 different manufacturers operate in the band. 4G and 5G NB-IoT devices and networks will provide an economical solution for customers that need to connect thousands or even millions of devices at very low cost.”

John Vislosky, Senior VP for Access Spectrum added that “In many cases, existing A Block systems use industrial radios to provide high speed communications to high priority sites. Since NB-IoT operates in as little as 200 kHz of spectrum, companies that already use the block have the option to add NB-IoT to support long range and economical connections to devices with less demanding performance requirements.”

This new 3GPP designation allows base stations from various suppliers to interoperate with a variety of devices from other manufacturers. Low-cost high-volume chips and modules from a variety of manufacturers can be incorporated into a wide range of user devices to provide communications solutions that were previously cost-prohibitive. 4G/5G Band designation opens up a range of new applications to support utility operations including smart-grid, improved management of energy production and transportation, and smart cities deployments for control of streetlights, traffic and parking management.

Stephen P. Osvath, P.E., Director, Network Engineering & Operations – FirstEnergy Corp., noted that “Approval of the 700 MHz A Block opens up more options for how FirstEnergy Corp. and other utilities may use the band to accomplish their service goals. The NB-IoT standard offers the opportunity to improve the speed-to-market, reliability, interoperability, and scalability of our field communications.”

“Puloli is proud to have led the standardization efforts at the 3GPP,” said Kethees Ketheesan, CEO of Puloli. “This is a precedent-setting milestone for the industry. This is the first time a stand-alone NB-IoT band has been standardized. It is also the first time a spectrum narrower than 1.4 MHz has been standardized for 4G or 5G.”

While many critical infrastructure companies have purchased Upper 700 MHz band spectrum, the licenses are available for purchase in over 60% of the United States from Select Spectrum and Access Spectrum.

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About Select Spectrum

Select Spectrum provides licensed spectrum marketing, brokerage and consulting services as well as offering a premier spectrum marketplace. The company actively represents clients holding licenses across 24 different FCC spectrum bands, including narrowband, broadband and millimeter wave frequencies, ranging from 150 MHz to 40 GHz. Since 2010, Select Spectrum has facilitated over 300 FCC license transactions in the secondary spectrum marketplace. For more information, please visit <https://www.selectspectrum.com>.

About Access Spectrum

Access Spectrum, LLC is the license holder of 2 MHz of Spectrum in the Upper 700 MHz A Block. Access Spectrum has been selling their remaining licenses “parceled” to fit specific geographic regions. Access Spectrum has sold and transferred Spectrum Licenses to 20+ Utilities, Petrochem and Railroad entities.

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