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For Immediate Release

FCC ADOPTS INITIAL RULES FOR ‘DRONE’ OPERATIONS IN THE 5 GHz SPECTRUM BAND

WASHINGTON, August 29, 2024—The Federal Communications Commission adopted new rules to enable initial drone operations in the 5 GHz spectrum band for wireless communications necessary to safely control the flights of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS). The use of UAS in the United States is growing quickly: during this decade, UAS operations are expected to triple in terms of the number of devices and see the market expand into the tens of billions of dollars. These tools are aiding in search and rescue missions, helping farmers, inspecting infrastructure, delivering medicine, and even gathering news.

“We are already starting to live in the future we’ve long imagined: uncrewed aircraft systems are fighting wildfires, supporting news gathering, delivering packages, and supporting national security,” **said FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “The FCC is working hard to meet the spectrum needs of remote-piloted aircraft activity. We will continue to work with our public and private partners to support the best outcomes for public safety, wireless services, consumers, and our economy.”

This action establishes initial service rules that allow operators to obtain direct frequency assignments in a portion of the 5030-5091 MHz band for non-networked operations. The new rules rely on dynamic frequency management systems to manage and coordinate access to the spectrum and enable its safe and efficient use. These management systems provide requesting operators with temporary frequency assignments to support UAS control link communications with a level of reliability suitable for operations in controlled airspace and other safety-critical circumstances.

To enable operations in the band during the period before the dynamic frequency management systems are in operation, the rules establish an interim access mechanism in which operators seeking to transmit in the band first submit a request to the Federal Aviation Administration for deconfliction and approval, and, upon FAA authorization, complete an online registration form with the Commission. The interim mechanism will be made available to operators after the rules become effective and the Commission has announced by Public Notice that it will begin accepting registrations.

The [Report and Order](#) adopted by a vote of the Commission takes the initial step previewed in the National Spectrum Strategy released in November of 2023, in which the FCC will take near-term action to facilitate initial deployment of UAS in the 5 GHz band, in advance of future study of the band in coordination with National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the FAA. Meanwhile, the Commission will continue to work on future actions it can take to effectively meet the needs of evolving UAS operations.

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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. Cir. 1974).