

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-431 effective July 1, 1993, see section 5 of Pub. L. 101-431, set out as a note under section 303 of this title.

§ 331. Very high frequency stations and AM radio stations**(a) Very high frequency stations**

It shall be the policy of the Federal Communications Commission to allocate channels for very high frequency commercial television broadcasting in a manner which ensures that not less than one such channel shall be allocated to each State, if technically feasible. In any case in which licensee of a very high frequency commercial television broadcast station notifies the Commission to the effect that such licensee will agree to the reallocation of its channel to a community within a State in which there is allocated no very high frequency commercial television broadcast channel at the time¹ such notification, the Commission shall, notwithstanding any other provision of law, order such reallocation and issue a license to such licensee for that purpose pursuant to such notification for a term of not to exceed 5 years as provided in section 307(d)² of this title.

(b) AM radio stations

It shall be the policy of the Commission, in any case in which the licensee of an existing AM daytime-only station located in a community with a population of more than 100,000 persons that lacks a local full-time aural station licensed to that community and that is located within a Class I station primary service area notifies the Commission that such licensee seeks to provide full-time service, to ensure that such a licensee is able to place a principal community contour signal over its entire community of license 24 hours a day, if technically feasible.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title III, § 331, as added Pub. L. 97-248, title III, § 355, Sept. 3, 1982, 96 Stat. 641; amended Pub. L. 102-243, § 4, Dec. 20, 1991, 105 Stat. 2402; Pub. L. 103-414, title III, § 303(a)(18), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4295; Pub. L. 115-141, div. P, title IV, § 402(i)(5), Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1089.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Subsec. (d) of section 307 of this title, referred to in subsec. (a), was redesignated subsec. (c) of section 307 by Pub. L. 97-259, title I, § 112(a), Sept. 13, 1982, 96 Stat. 1093.

CODIFICATION

Another section 331 of act June 19, 1934 was renumbered section 332 and is classified to section 332 of this title.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 331, act June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title III, § 331, as added Sept. 14, 1973, Pub. L. 93-107, § 1, 87 Stat. 350, related to broadcasting of games of professional sports clubs, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 93-107, § 2, Sept. 14, 1973, 87 Stat. 351, effective Dec. 31, 1975.

¹ So in original. Probably should be followed by "of".

² See References in Text note below.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 115-141 struck out at end: "The Commission shall report to the appropriate committees of Congress within 30 days after December 20, 1991, on how it intends to meet this policy goal."

1994—Pub. L. 103-414 amended section catchline generally.

1991—Pub. L. 102-243 inserted "and AM radio stations" in section catchline, designated existing provisions as subsec. (a) and inserted heading, and added subsec. (b).

§ 332. Mobile services**(a) Factors which Commission must consider**

In taking actions to manage the spectrum to be made available for use by the private mobile services, the Commission shall consider, consistent with section 151 of this title, whether such actions will—

(1) promote the safety of life and property;

(2) improve the efficiency of spectrum use and reduce the regulatory burden upon spectrum users, based upon sound engineering principles, user operational requirements, and marketplace demands;

(3) encourage competition and provide services to the largest feasible number of users; or

(4) increase interservice sharing opportunities between private mobile services and other services.

(b) Advisory coordinating committees

(1) The Commission, in coordinating the assignment of frequencies to stations in the private mobile services and in the fixed services (as defined by the Commission by rule), shall have authority to utilize assistance furnished by advisory coordinating committees consisting of individuals who are not officers or employees of the Federal Government.

(2) The authority of the Commission established in this subsection shall not be subject to or affected by the provisions of part III of title 5 or section 1342 of title 31.

(3) Any person who provides assistance to the Commission under this subsection shall not be considered, by reason of having provided such assistance, a Federal employee.

(4) Any advisory coordinating committee which furnishes assistance to the Commission under this subsection shall not be subject to the provisions of chapter 10 of title 5.

(c) Regulatory treatment of mobile services**(1) Common carrier treatment of commercial mobile services**

(A) A person engaged in the provision of a service that is a commercial mobile service shall, insofar as such person is so engaged, be treated as a common carrier for purposes of this chapter, except for such provisions of subchapter II as the Commission may specify by regulation as inapplicable to that service or person. In prescribing or amending any such regulation, the Commission may not specify any provision of section 201, 202, or 208 of this title, and may specify any other provision only if the Commission determines that—

(i) enforcement of such provision is not necessary in order to ensure that the charges, practices, classifications, or regula-

tions for or in connection with that service are just and reasonable and are not unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory;

(ii) enforcement of such provision is not necessary for the protection of consumers; and

(iii) specifying such provision is consistent with the public interest.

(B) Upon reasonable request of any person providing commercial mobile service, the Commission shall order a common carrier to establish physical connections with such service pursuant to the provisions of section 201 of this title. Except to the extent that the Commission is required to respond to such a request, this subparagraph shall not be construed as a limitation or expansion of the Commission's authority to order interconnection pursuant to this chapter.

(C) As a part of making a determination with respect to the public interest under subparagraph (A)(iii), the Commission shall consider whether the proposed regulation (or amendment thereof) will promote competitive market conditions, including the extent to which such regulation (or amendment) will enhance competition among providers of commercial mobile services. If the Commission determines that such regulation (or amendment) will promote competition among providers of commercial mobile services, such determination may be the basis for a Commission finding that such regulation (or amendment) is in the public interest.

(D) The Commission shall, not later than 180 days after August 10, 1993, complete a rule-making required to implement this paragraph with respect to the licensing of personal communications services, including making any determinations required by subparagraph (C).

(2) Non-common carrier treatment of private mobile services

A person engaged in the provision of a service that is a private mobile service shall not, insofar as such person is so engaged, be treated as a common carrier for any purpose under this chapter. A common carrier (other than a person that was treated as a provider of a private land mobile service prior to August 10, 1993) shall not provide any dispatch service on any frequency allocated for common carrier service, except to the extent such dispatch service is provided on stations licensed in the domestic public land mobile radio service before January 1, 1982. The Commission may by regulation terminate, in whole or in part, the prohibition contained in the preceding sentence if the Commission determines that such termination will serve the public interest.

(3) State preemption

(A) Notwithstanding sections 152(b) and 221(b) of this title, no State or local government shall have any authority to regulate the entry of or the rates charged by any commercial mobile service or any private mobile service, except that this paragraph shall not prohibit a State from regulating the other terms and conditions of commercial mobile services. Nothing in this subparagraph shall exempt

providers of commercial mobile services (where such services are a substitute for land line telephone exchange service for a substantial portion of the communications within such State) from requirements imposed by a State commission on all providers of telecommunications services necessary to ensure the universal availability of telecommunications service at affordable rates. Notwithstanding the first sentence of this subparagraph, a State may petition the Commission for authority to regulate the rates for any commercial mobile service and the Commission shall grant such petition if such State demonstrates that—

(i) market conditions with respect to such services fail to protect subscribers adequately from unjust and unreasonable rates or rates that are unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory; or

(ii) such market conditions exist and such service is a replacement for land line telephone exchange service for a substantial portion of the telephone land line exchange service within such State.

The Commission shall provide reasonable opportunity for public comment in response to such petition, and shall, within 9 months after the date of its submission, grant or deny such petition. If the Commission grants such petition, the Commission shall authorize the State to exercise under State law such authority over rates, for such periods of time, as the Commission deems necessary to ensure that such rates are just and reasonable and not unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory.

(B) If a State has in effect on June 1, 1993, any regulation concerning the rates for any commercial mobile service offered in such State on such date, such State may, no later than 1 year after August 10, 1993, petition the Commission requesting that the State be authorized to continue exercising authority over such rates. If a State files such a petition, the State's existing regulation shall, notwithstanding subparagraph (A), remain in effect until the Commission completes all action (including any reconsideration) on such petition. The Commission shall review such petition in accordance with the procedures established in such subparagraph, shall complete all action (including any reconsideration) within 12 months after such petition is filed, and shall grant such petition if the State satisfies the showing required under subparagraph (A)(i) or (A)(ii). If the Commission grants such petition, the Commission shall authorize the State to exercise under State law such authority over rates, for such period of time, as the Commission deems necessary to ensure that such rates are just and reasonable and not unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory. After a reasonable period of time, as determined by the Commission, has elapsed from the issuance of an order under subparagraph (A) or this subparagraph, any interested party may petition the Commission for an order that the exercise of authority by a State pursuant to such subparagraph is no longer necessary to ensure that the rates for commercial mobile services are just and reasonable and not unjustly or

unreasonably discriminatory. The Commission shall provide reasonable opportunity for public comment in response to such petition, and shall, within 9 months after the date of its submission, grant or deny such petition in whole or in part.

(4) Regulatory treatment of communications satellite corporation

Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to alter or affect the regulatory treatment required by title IV of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 [47 U.S.C. 741 et seq.] of the corporation authorized by title III of such Act [47 U.S.C. 731 et seq.].

(5) Space segment capacity

Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Commission from continuing to determine whether the provision of space segment capacity by satellite systems to providers of commercial mobile services shall be treated as common carriage.

(6) Foreign ownership

The Commission, upon a petition for waiver filed within 6 months after August 10, 1993, may waive the application of section 310(b) of this title to any foreign ownership that lawfully existed before May 24, 1993, of any provider of a private land mobile service that will be treated as a common carrier as a result of the enactment of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, but only upon the following conditions:

(A) The extent of foreign ownership interest shall not be increased above the extent which existed on May 24, 1993.

(B) Such waiver shall not permit the subsequent transfer of ownership to any other person in violation of section 310(b) of this title.

(7) Preservation of local zoning authority

(A) General authority

Except as provided in this paragraph, nothing in this chapter shall limit or affect the authority of a State or local government or instrumentality thereof over decisions regarding the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities.

(B) Limitations

(i) The regulation of the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities by any State or local government or instrumentality thereof—

(I) shall not unreasonably discriminate among providers of functionally equivalent services; and

(II) shall not prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the provision of personal wireless services.

(ii) A State or local government or instrumentality thereof shall act on any request for authorization to place, construct, or modify personal wireless service facilities within a reasonable period of time after the request is duly filed with such government or instrumentality, taking into account the nature and scope of such request.

(iii) Any decision by a State or local government or instrumentality thereof to deny a request to place, construct, or modify personal wireless service facilities shall be in writing and supported by substantial evidence contained in a written record.

(iv) No State or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission's regulations concerning such emissions.

(v) Any person adversely affected by any final action or failure to act by a State or local government or any instrumentality thereof that is inconsistent with this subparagraph may, within 30 days after such action or failure to act, commence an action in any court of competent jurisdiction. The court shall hear and decide such action on an expedited basis. Any person adversely affected by an act or failure to act by a State or local government or any instrumentality thereof that is inconsistent with clause (iv) may petition the Commission for relief.

(C) Definitions

For purposes of this paragraph—

(i) the term "personal wireless services" means commercial mobile services, unlicensed wireless services, and common carrier wireless exchange access services;

(ii) the term "personal wireless service facilities" means facilities for the provision of personal wireless services; and

(iii) the term "unlicensed wireless service" means the offering of telecommunications services using duly authorized devices which do not require individual licenses, but does not mean the provision of direct-to-home satellite services (as defined in section 303(v) of this title).

(8) Mobile services access

A person engaged in the provision of commercial mobile services, insofar as such person is so engaged, shall not be required to provide equal access to common carriers for the provision of telephone toll services. If the Commission determines that subscribers to such services are denied access to the provider of telephone toll services of the subscribers' choice, and that such denial is contrary to the public interest, convenience, and necessity, then the Commission shall prescribe regulations to afford subscribers unblocked access to the provider of telephone toll services of the subscribers' choice through the use of a carrier identification code assigned to such provider or other mechanism. The requirements for unblocking shall not apply to mobile satellite services unless the Commission finds it to be in the public interest to apply such requirements to such services.

(d) Definitions

For purposes of this section—

(1) the term "commercial mobile service" means any mobile service (as defined in section 153 of this title) that is provided for profit

and makes interconnected service available (A) to the public or (B) to such classes of eligible users as to be effectively available to a substantial portion of the public, as specified by regulation by the Commission;

(2) the term “interconnected service” means service that is interconnected with the public switched network (as such terms are defined by regulation by the Commission) or service for which a request for interconnection is pending pursuant to subsection (c)(1)(B); and

(3) the term “private mobile service” means any mobile service (as defined in section 153 of this title) that is not a commercial mobile service or the functional equivalent of a commercial mobile service, as specified by regulation by the Commission.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title III, § 332, formerly § 331, as added Pub. L. 97-259, title I, § 120(a), Sept. 13, 1982, 96 Stat. 1096; renumbered § 332, Pub. L. 102-385, § 25(b), Oct. 5, 1992, 106 Stat. 1502; amended Pub. L. 103-66, title VI, § 6002(b)(2)(A), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 392; Pub. L. 104-104, § 3(d)(2), title VII, §§ 704(a), 705, Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 61, 151, 153; Pub. L. 115-141, div. P, title IV, § 402(g), Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1089; Pub. L. 117-286, § 4(a)(296), Dec. 27, 2022, 136 Stat. 4338.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Provisions of part III of title 5, referred to in subsec. (b)(2), are classified to section 2101 et seq. of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (c), was in the original “this Act”, meaning act June 19, 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, known as the Communications Act of 1934, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 609 of this title and Tables.

The Communications Satellite Act of 1962, referred to in subsec. (c)(4), is Pub. L. 87-624, Aug. 31, 1962, 76 Stat. 419. Titles III and IV of the Act are classified generally to subchapters III (§ 731 et seq.) and IV (§ 741 et seq.), respectively, of chapter 6 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 701 of this title and Tables.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, referred to in subsec. (c)(6), is Pub. L. 103-66, Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 312. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

CODIFICATION

In subsec. (b)(2), “section 1342 of title 31” substituted for “section 3679(b) of the Revised Statutes (31 U.S.C. 665(b))” on authority of Pub. L. 97-258, § 4(b), Sept. 13, 1982, 96 Stat. 1067, the first section of which enacted Title 31, Money and Finance.

AMENDMENTS

2022—Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 117-286 substituted “chapter 10 of title 5.” for “the Federal Advisory Committee Act.”

2018—Subsec. (c)(1)(C). Pub. L. 115-141 struck out first and second sentences which read as follows: “The Commission shall review competitive market conditions with respect to commercial mobile services and shall include in its annual report an analysis of those conditions. Such analysis shall include an identification of the number of competitors in various commercial mobile services, an analysis of whether or not there is effective competition, an analysis of whether any of such competitors have a dominant share of the market for such services, and a statement of whether additional providers or classes of providers in those services would be likely to enhance competition.”

1996—Subsec. (c)(7). Pub. L. 104-104, § 704(a), added par. (7).

Subsec. (c)(8). Pub. L. 104-104, § 705, added par. (8).

Subsec. (d)(1), (3). Pub. L. 104-104, § 3(d)(2), substituted “section 153” for “section 153(n)”.

1993—Pub. L. 103-66 struck out “Private land” before “mobile services” in section catchline, struck out “land” before “mobile services” wherever appearing in subsecs. (a) and (b), added subsecs. (c) and (d), and struck out former subsec. (c) which related to service provided by specialized mobile radio, multiple licensed radio dispatch systems, and other radio dispatch systems; common carriers; and rate or entry regulations.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1993 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 103-66, title VI, § 6002(c), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 396, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section [amending this section and sections 152, 153, and 309 of this title] are effective on the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 10, 1993].

“(2) EFFECTIVE DATES OF MOBILE SERVICE AMENDMENTS.—The amendments made by subsection (b)(2) [amending this section and sections 152 and 153 of this title] shall be effective on the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 10, 1993], except that—

“(A) section 332(c)(3)(A) of the Communications Act of 1934 [subsec. (c)(3)(A) of this section], as amended by such subsection, shall take effect 1 year after such date of enactment; and

“(B) any private land mobile service provided by any person before such date of enactment, and any paging service utilizing frequencies allocated as of January 1, 1993, for private land mobile services, shall, except for purposes of section 332(c)(6) of such Act [subsec. (c)(6) of this section], be treated as a private mobile service until 3 years after such date of enactment.”

AVAILABILITY OF PROPERTY

Pub. L. 104-104, title VII, § 704(c), Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 152, provided that: “Within 180 days of the enactment of this Act [Feb. 8, 1996], the President or his designee shall prescribe procedures by which Federal departments and agencies may make available on a fair, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory basis, property, rights-of-way, and easements under their control for the placement of new telecommunications services that are dependent, in whole or in part, upon the utilization of Federal spectrum rights for the transmission or reception of such services. These procedures may establish a presumption that requests for the use of property, rights-of-way, and easements by duly authorized providers should be granted absent unavoidable direct conflict with the department or agency’s mission, or the current or planned use of the property, rights-of-way, and easements in question. Reasonable fees may be charged to providers of such telecommunications services for use of property, rights-of-way, and easements. The Commission shall provide technical support to States to encourage them to make property, rights-of-way, and easements under their jurisdiction available for such purposes.”

TRANSITIONAL RULEMAKING FOR MOBILE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Pub. L. 103-66, title VI, § 6002(d)(3), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 397, provided that: “Within 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 10, 1993], the Federal Communications Commission—

“(A) shall issue such modifications or terminations of the regulations applicable (before the date of enactment of this Act) to private land mobile services as are necessary to implement the amendments made by subsection (b)(2) [amending this section and sections 152 and 153 of this title];

“(B) in the regulations that will, after such date of enactment, apply to a service that was a private land mobile service and that becomes a commercial mobile service (as a consequence of such amendments), shall make such other modifications or terminations as may be necessary and practical to assure that licensees in such service are subjected to technical requirements that are comparable to the technical requirements that apply to licensees that are providers of substantially similar common carrier services;

“(C) shall issue such other regulations as are necessary to implement the amendments made by subsection (b)(2); and

“(D) shall include, in such regulations, modifications, and terminations, such provisions as are necessary to provide for an orderly transition.”

§ 333. Willful or malicious interference

No person shall willfully or maliciously interfere with or cause interference to any radio communications of any station licensed or authorized by or under this chapter or operated by the United States Government.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title III, § 333, as added Pub. L. 101-396, § 9, Sept. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 850.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original “this Act”, meaning act June 19, 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, known as the Communications Act of 1934, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 609 of this title and Tables.

§ 334. Limitation on revision of equal employment opportunity regulations

(a) Limitation

Except as specifically provided in this section, the Commission shall not revise—

(1) the regulations concerning equal employment opportunity as in effect on September 1, 1992 (47 C.F.R. 73.2080) as such regulations apply to television broadcast station licensees and permittees; or

(2) the forms used by such licensees and permittees to report pertinent employment data to the Commission.

(b) Midterm review

The Commission shall revise the regulations described in subsection (a) to require a midterm review of television broadcast station licensees’ employment practices and to require the Commission to inform such licensees of necessary improvements in recruitment practices identified as a consequence of such review.

(c) Authority to make technical revisions

The Commission may revise the regulations described in subsection (a) to make nonsubstantive technical or clerical revisions in such regulations as necessary to reflect changes in technology, terminology, or Commission organization.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title III, § 334, as added Pub. L. 102-385, § 22(f), Oct. 5, 1992, 106 Stat. 1499.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 60 days after Oct. 5, 1992, see section 28 of Pub. L. 102-385, set out as an Effective Date of 1992 Amendment note under section 325 of this title.

§ 335. Direct broadcast satellite service obligations

(a) Proceeding required to review DBS responsibilities

The Commission shall, within 180 days after October 5, 1992, initiate a rulemaking proceeding to impose, on providers of direct broadcast satellite service, public interest or other requirements for providing video programming. Any regulations prescribed pursuant to such rulemaking shall, at a minimum, apply the access to broadcast time requirement of section 312(a)(7) of this title and the use of facilities requirements of section 315 of this title to providers of direct broadcast satellite service providing video programming. Such proceeding also shall examine the opportunities that the establishment of direct broadcast satellite service provides for the principle of localism under this chapter, and the methods by which such principle may be served through technological and other developments in, or regulation of, such service.

(b) Carriage obligations for noncommercial, educational, State public affairs, and informational programming

(1) Channel capacity required

(A) In general

Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Commission shall require, as a condition of any provision, initial authorization, or authorization renewal for a provider of direct broadcast satellite service providing video programming, that the provider of such service reserve a portion of its channel capacity, equal to not less than 4 percent nor more than 7 percent, exclusively for noncommercial programming of an educational or informational nature.

(B) Requirement for qualified satellite provider

The Commission shall require, as a condition of any provision, initial authorization, or authorization renewal for a qualified satellite provider of direct broadcast satellite service providing video programming, that such provider reserve a portion of its channel capacity, equal to not less than 3.5 percent nor more than 7 percent, exclusively for noncommercial programming of an educational or informational nature.

(2) Use of unused channel capacity

A provider of such service may utilize for any purpose any unused channel capacity required to be reserved under this subsection pending the actual use of such channel capacity for noncommercial programming of an educational or informational nature.

(3) Prices, terms, and conditions; editorial control

A provider of direct broadcast satellite service shall meet the requirements of this subsection by making channel capacity available to national educational programming suppliers, upon reasonable prices, terms, and conditions, as determined by the Commission under paragraph (4). The provider of direct