

**3.7 GHz Band Space Station Operator Transition Plans; 3.7 GHz
Band Earth Station Lump Sum Payment Elections**SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Modified Collection Titled: 3.7 GHz Band Space Station Operator Transition Plans; 3.7 GHz Band Earth Station Lump Sum Payment Elections. This request is being submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to receive approval for a revision to a currently approved information collection which is necessary to implement the framework adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) for reforming the 3.7–4.2 GHz band (C-band).

A. Justification:

1. *Circumstances that make this collection necessary.* The Commission seeks emergency processing under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), 5 C.F.R. § 1320.13. The Commission is requesting approval from OMB for this modified, currently approved information collection no later than thirty-five (35) days after it is received at OMB.

Under this revised information collection, the Commission will collect information that will be used to determine when, how, and at what cost existing operations in the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band will be cleared. Specifically, this collection will serve as the starting point for planning and managing the process of efficiently and expeditiously clearing the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band so that the 3.98–4.14 GHz band can be auctioned for flexible-use service licenses by July 4, 2027, pursuant to the Commission’s statutory mandate under the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) Act.¹

On July 22, 2026, in furtherance of the goal of releasing more mid-band spectrum into the market to support and enable next-generation wireless networks, the Commission adopted a Report and Order, FCC 26-46 (*Upper C-band R&O*) in which it reformed the use of the 4.0–4.2 GHz portion of the C-Band.² The 4.0–4.2 GHz band currently is allocated in the United States exclusively for non-Federal use on a primary basis for Fixed Satellite Service (FSS) and Fixed Service. Domestically, space station operators use the 4.0–4.2 GHz band to provide downlink signals of various bandwidths to licensed transmit-receive, registered receive-only, and unregistered receive-only earth stations throughout the United States. The *Upper C-band R&O* calls for the relocation of existing FSS operations in the C-band, making 160 megahertz (3.98–4.14 GHz) available for flexible-use terrestrial wireless service throughout the contiguous United States through a Commission-administered public auction of licenses that must be completed by July 4, 2027, pursuant to the OB BB Act mandate.³ The Commission adopted a robust transition schedule to achieve an expeditious clearing and relocation of FSS operations and ensure that a significant amount of spectrum is made available quickly for next-generation wireless deployments, while also ensuring effective accommodation of relocated incumbent users. Pursuant to the *Upper C-band R&O*, all incumbent FSS operations in the contiguous United States must clear the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band by December 30, 2030, or June 30, 2031,⁴ to ensure a timely transition process.

¹ See Pub. L. No. 119-21, § 40002(b)(2), 139 Stat. 72 (2025).

² See *Upper C-band (3.98–4.2 GHz)*, GN Docket No. 25-59, *Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band*, GN Docket No. 18-122, Report and Order, Order of Proposed Modification, and Order on Reconsideration, FCC 26-46 (rel. July 24, 2026).

³ The 20 megahertz from 4.14–4.16 GHz is being reserved as a guard band.

⁴ The December 30 deadline applies to the top 75 Partial Economic Areas (PEAs) and aligns with the Federal Aviation Administration’s first deadline to retrofit aircraft radio altimeters. The June 30 deadline applies to all other

The Commission concluded in the *Upper C-band R&O* that, before the public auction of new licenses commences, it is appropriate for potential bidders to: (1) know when they will get access to the spectrum in the 3.98–4.14 GHz portion of the C-band that is currently occupied by incumbent FSS space station operators and earth stations;⁵ and (2) have an estimate of how much they may be required to pay for incumbent relocation costs and incentive payments should they become Upper C-band wireless licensees.⁶

To facilitate the provision of this information to potential auction bidders, the Commission is seeking approval for a revised information collection to permit it to collect the following information from incumbents as adopted in the *Upper C-band R&O*:

Transition Plans⁷

The *Upper C-band R&O* requires each eligible space station operator to submit to the Commission by November 5, 2026, and make available for public review, a detailed transition plan describing the necessary steps and estimated costs for the eligible space station operator to clear its existing operations in the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band in the contiguous United States and its individual timeline for doing so.⁸ Specifically, the transition plan must detail:

- (1) all existing space stations with operations that will need to be repacked;
- (2) the number of new satellites, if any, that the space station operator will need to launch to maintain sufficient capacity post-transition, including detailed descriptions of why such new satellites are necessary;
- (3) the specific grooming plan for migrating existing services into new spectrum, including the pre- and post-transition frequencies that each customer will occupy;
- (4) any necessary technology upgrades or other solutions that the space station operator intends to implement;

areas.

⁵ The *Upper C-band R&O* defines “incumbent earth stations” for the Upper C-band transition to include fixed and temporary fixed earth stations that were operational as of April 19, 2018, and that: (1) continue to be operational; (2) were licensed or registered in the Commission’s former International Bureau Filing System IBFS (now ICFS) database on November 7, 2018; and (3) timely certified the accuracy of the information on file with the Commission by May 28, 2019.

⁶ New Upper C-band wireless licensees are required to pay for the reasonable and necessary relocation costs of incumbent space station and incumbent earth station operators that are required to clear the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band.

⁷ See 47 CFR 27.1412(e)(1).

⁸ An “eligible space station operator” is an incumbent space station operator that has demonstrated as of February 1, 2020, that it has an existing relationship to provide service via C-band satellite transmission to one or more incumbent earth stations in the contiguous United States. An eligible space station operator may receive reimbursement for relocation costs incurred as a result of transitioning existing C-band service out of the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the Upper C-band. An eligible space station operator is responsible for relocating all of its associated incumbent earth stations and must outline the details of such relocation in the transition plan (unless an incumbent earth station owner elects to receive a lump sum payment and assumes responsibility for transitioning its own earth stations).

(5) the number and location of incumbent earth station antennas currently receiving the eligible space station operator's transmissions that will need to be transitioned;

(6) an estimate of the number of incumbent earth station antennas that will require retuning, repointing, or other modifications to receive content on new transponder frequencies post-transition; and

(7) the specific timeline by which the space station operator will implement the actions described in its plan.

An eligible space station operator may make changes to its transition plan to update certain information or cure any defects that may be identified by the Commission or by relevant stakeholders during a public comment window.

*Incumbent Earth Station Lump Sum Payment Elections*⁹

The *Upper C-band R&O* provides an incumbent earth station operator with the option of: (1) accepting reimbursement payments for its reasonable and necessary relocation costs for the transition; or (2) in lieu of actual relocation costs, opting out of the formal relocation process and accepting a lump sum reimbursement payment for its incumbent earth stations on a per-site basis based on the average, estimated cost of relocating such incumbent earth stations. The *Upper C-band R&O* directs the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau to announce the lump sum that will be available per incumbent earth station as well as the process for electing lump sum payments and requires that, no later than 60 days after the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau announces the lump sum payment amounts, an incumbent earth station operator that wishes to receive a lump sum payment make an irrevocable lump sum payment election that will apply to such earth stations in the contiguous United States.

Statutory authority for this information collection is contained in sections 1, 2, 4(i), 4(j), 5(c), 201, 302, 303, 304, 307(e), and 309 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 152, 154(i), 154(j), 155(c), 201, 302, 303, 304, 307(e), and 309.

2. *Use of Information.* The information that will be collected under this modified, currently approved information collection is designed to ensure that the framework adopted by the Commission in the *Upper C-band R&O* for reforming the 4.0–4.2 GHz portion of the C-band makes new flexible use licenses in the vacated spectrum available through an auction in a timely, transparent, and efficient manner. Using the information collected under this modified, currently approved information collection will provide the Commission and affected and interested parties with information they need to begin the transition process, carry out their transition obligations, understand when the spectrum in the 3.98–4.14 GHz portion of the C-band will be accessible to new licensees, and estimate how much such licensees may be required to pay for incumbent relocation costs, thereby furthering the goal of releasing more mid-band spectrum into the market to support and enable next-generation wireless networks.

The information in earth station operators' lump sum payment elections will provide the Commission and eligible space station operators with helpful information regarding which earth stations that space station operators will or will not be responsible for in their respective transitions. It will also provide additional clarity regarding relocation costs to prospective flexible-use licensees. The information submitted by eligible space station operators in their transition plans will provide necessary information about a space station operator's specific plans for accomplishing its clearing of existing operations in the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band. With this information, the Commission can reasonably confirm that the space station operators have considered the necessary aspects and costs of the transition and appear on track to meet the applicable transition deadlines. This information will also provide potential bidders with

⁹ See 47 CFR 27.1419.

valuable information regarding the operators' ability to successfully clear spectrum by the applicable transition deadlines, the costs for transitioning, and the anticipated payment obligations associated with the overlay licenses they could potentially win in the auction.

3. *Technological collection techniques.* Entities required to submit information under this modified, currently approved information collection will file the required information electronically using the Commission's existing systems. This collection mechanism is being used to reduce the technological burden on the public and the Commission. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau will issue public notices that provide additional guidance and other information in advance of the deadlines by which incumbents must submit their transition plans and lump sum payment elections.

4. *Efforts to identify duplication.* There will be no duplicative information collected. This information collection is a modified, currently approved information collection to collect specific information needed to implement the framework for reforming the 3.98–4.2 GHz band that was recently adopted by the Commission in the *Upper C-band R&O*. Thus, the information being collected under this collection is not already available.

5. *Impact on small entities.* In conformance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Commission has made an effort to minimize the burden on all respondents regardless of size by limiting the information collected under this collection to that which is necessary to obtain the information needed to implement the framework for reforming the 4.0–4.2 GHz band recently adopted by the Commission in the *Upper C-band R&O*. Moreover, the requirement to submit information under this collection is limited to only eligible space station operators and incumbent earth station operators that operate in the 4.0–4.2 GHz portion of the C-band. In addition, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau will issue public notices in advance of the deadlines by which eligible space station operators must submit their transition plans and incumbent earth station operators must submit their lump sum payment elections to provide additional guidance and other information about making their submissions, thereby further minimizing the burden on all respondents, including small entities, related to this information collection.

6. *Consequences if information is not collected.* This modified, currently approved information collection is critical for the Commission to be able to initiate the process of planning and managing the efficient, expeditious clearing of the 4.0–4.16 GHz portion of the C-band so that the 3.98–4.14 GHz band can be auctioned for flexible-use licenses. The Commission will use the information collected to determine whether relocation of incumbents will occur by the applicable transition deadline, ensure that incumbents are prepared to clear the 4.0–4.16 GHz band efficiently and expeditiously, and provide potential bidders with information regarding the licenses on which they may bid in the auction, including when they may access the spectrum and an estimate of how much they may be required to pay for incumbent relocation costs should they become overlay licensees. Without this information, the framework that the Commission adopted in the *Upper C-band R&O* will not be able to be efficiently or expeditiously implemented, and the transition will be challenging to accomplish and likely will take significantly longer, which would delay the auction's winning bidders from gaining access to their new licenses and deploying services, resulting in a corresponding delay for consumers and businesses to take advantage of next-generation wireless communications services.

7. *Special circumstances.* The modified, currently approved collection does not have any of the characteristics that would require separate justification under 5 C.F.R. § 1320.5(d)(2).

8. *Federal Register notice; efforts to consult with persons outside the Commission.* Emergency approval is being sought for the above-described information collection requirements, and the Commission seeks waiver of the full 60-day notice requirement due to the emergency nature of this request under 5 C.F.R. § 1320.8(d). However, as required by the PRA and OMB's rules, the Commission

published a 30-day notice in the Federal Register announcing submission of this emergency request and seeking public comment on the revised information collection (*see* 91 FR 53859) on August 20, 2026. The Commission will conduct all the regular OMB clearance processes and procedures for the revised information collection upon approval of the emergency request and will publish the necessary notices in the *Federal Register* when seeking regular OMB approval.

9. *Payments or gifts to respondents.* Respondents will not receive any payments or gifts.

10. *Assurance of confidentiality.* The information collected under this collection will be made publicly available. However, to the extent information submitted pursuant to this information collection is determined to be confidential, it will be protected by the Commission. If a respondent seeks to have information collected pursuant to this information collection withheld from public inspection, the respondent may request confidential treatment pursuant to section 0.459 of the Commission's rules for such information.¹⁰

11. *Questions of a sensitive nature.* The information collection requirements do not ask questions of a sensitive nature.

12. *Estimates of the hour burden of the collection to respondents.* The Commission estimates that there are three eligible space station operators in the 4.0–4.2 GHz band. Because all eligible space station operators are required to submit a transition plan concerning their respective relocation plans and costs, we expect that three eligible space station operators will submit transition plans. The Commission estimates that there are as many as 3,000 incumbent earth station operators that could request a lump sum payment for relocation costs. The decision regarding whether to elect to receive a lump sum payment rests exclusively with the earth station operators and, therefore, earth station operators exclusively determine the number of elections that may be received under this information collection. For this reason, it is difficult to know the number of earth station operators that will submit a lump sum payment election and and/or for how many sites. The Commission therefore estimates that up to 3,000 earth station operators could file lump sum payment elections. Based on this, the following represents the Commission's estimated hour burden for the proposed modified, currently approved collection of information:

- a. Number of estimated annual respondents: Approximately **3,003 respondents** (three filing transition plans and up to 3,000 filing lump sum payment elections).
- b. Total number of annual responses: **3,003 responses.**
- c. Frequency of response: One-time.
- d. Total estimated annual burden: **104,160 hours**, calculated as follows:

Transition Plans

We expect that respondents will use both in-house staff and outside engineering consultants to prepare and submit their transition plans. We estimate the hours burden for each respondent to prepare and submit its transition plan will be 2,720 hours of in-house staff time and 600 hours of time from an outside consulting engineer which is accounted for under question 13 of the supporting statement. Total estimated annual hours burden is calculated as follows:

¹⁰ See 47 CFR 0.459.

3 estimated responses x 2,720 hours per response = 8,160 total estimated burden hours.

Incumbent Earth Station Lump Sum Payment Elections

32 hours per respondent for up to 3,000 respondents filing once. Total estimated annual hours burden is calculated as follows:

3,000 estimated responses x 32 hours per response = 96,000 total estimated burden hours.

- e. Total estimate of annual in-house cost to respondents for the estimated hours burden:
\$8,065,503.60.
- f. Explanation of calculation of in-house costs to respondents for the estimated hours burden:

Transition Plans

The Commission estimates that it will take four in-house engineers approximately 600 hours each to prepare the required information, with one of these engineers at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-15, Step 5 government staff member (\$91.93/hour) and three at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-11, Step 5 government staff member (\$46.40/hour), and that it will take four in-house attorneys approximately 80 hours each to prepare the required information, with one of these attorneys at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-15, Step 5 government staff member (\$91.93/hour) and three at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-12, Step 5 government staff member (\$55.62/hour). Therefore, the estimated annual in-house cost is as follows:

1 engineer at \$91.93/hour x 600 hours per engineer per response x 3 estimated respondents/responses = \$165,474

3 engineers at \$46.40/hour each x 600 hours per engineer per response x 3 estimated respondents/responses = \$250,560

1 attorney at \$91.93/hour x 80 hours per response x 3 estimated respondents/responses = \$22,063.20

3 attorneys at \$55.62/hour each x 80 hours per attorney per response x 3 estimated respondents/responses = \$40,046.40

Total In-House Cost for Transition Plans: \$165,474 + \$250,560 + \$22,063.20 + \$40,046.40 = \$478,143.60.

Incumbent Earth Station Operator Lump Sum Payment Elections

The Commission estimates that it will take two in-house attorneys approximately 16 hours each to prepare and submit the required information, with one at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-15, Step 5 government staff member (\$91.93/hour) and the other at a rate equivalent to the hourly rate of a GS-13, Step 5 government staff member (\$66.14/hour). Therefore, the estimated annual in-house cost is as follows:

1 attorney at \$91.93/hour x 16 hours per response x 3,000 estimated respondents/responses = \$4,412,640

1 attorney at \$66.14/hour x 16 hours per response x 3,000 estimated respondents/responses = \$3,174,720

Total In-House Cost for Incumbent Earth Station Operator Lump Sum Payment Elections:
\$4,412,640 + \$3,174,720 = \$7,587,360.

13. *Estimates of the annual cost burden of the collection to respondents.* There is no external cost to respondents for preparing and submitting their incumbent earth station operator lump sum payment elections. These respondents should not incur any other capital and start-up costs or operation and maintenance of purchase of services in connection with responding to this modified, currently approved information collection, as the information collected should be available and maintained as part of the respondents' customary and usual business or private practice.

The Commission expects that each respondent will require the assistance of one outside engineering consultant in addition to in-house staff to prepare and submit its transition plan, and estimates that each respondent will require 600 hours of time from an outside consulting engineer at a rate of \$300 per hour:

1 engineering consultant at \$300/hour x 600 hours per response x 3 estimated respondent/responses
= \$540,000

The Commission does not believe respondents should incur any other capital and start-up costs or operation and maintenance of purchase of services in connection with responding to this modified, currently approved information collection, as any additional information being collected with respect to the transition plans should be available and maintained as part of the respondents' customary and usual business or private practice.

Total Annual External Cost: \$540,000.

14. *Estimates of the annual cost burden to the Commission.* This modified, currently approved information collection will be administered by Commission attorneys and engineers. Based on its experience managing similar collections, the Commission estimates that its costs for administering this collection will be as follows and does not envision other costs (e.g., personnel or other resources from other government agencies or from the private sector):

Transition Plans

The Commission estimates that it will take two Commission engineers at the GS-14, Step 5 level approximately 80 hours each to review each submitted transition plan, and that it will take one attorney at the GS-15, Step 5 level and three attorneys at the GS-13, Step 5 level approximately 64 hours each to review each submitted transition plan.

3 responses x 160 hours x \$78.15/hour (Engineer, GS-14, Step 5) = **\$37,512.**

3 responses x 64 hours x \$91.93/hour (Attorney, GS-15, Step 5) = **\$17,650.56.**

3 responses x 192 hours x \$66.14/hour (Attorney, GS-13, Step 5) = **\$38,096.64.**

Incumbent Earth Station Operator Lump Sum Payment Elections

The Commission estimates that it will take one Commission attorney at the GS-15, Step 5 level and one Commission attorney at the GS-13, Step 5 level approximately 4 hours each to review each submitted incumbent earth station operator lump sum payment election.

3,000 responses x 4 hours x \$91.93/hour (Attorney, GS-15, Step 5) = **\$1,103,160.**

3,000 responses x 4 hours x \$66.14/hour (Attorney, GS-13, Step 5) = **\$793,680.**

Total Estimated Annual Cost to the Federal Government: \$1,990,099.20.

15. *Program changes or adjustment.* The Commission has program changes to this information collection as a result of the information collections that were adopted in FCC 26-46. These program changes/decreases are as follows: decrease of 7 to the number of respondents, decrease of 7 to the annual number of responses, decrease of 5,520 to the annual burden hours and decrease of \$360,000 to the annual cost.

There are no adjustments to the information collection.

16. *Collections of information whose results will be published.* The information collection will not be published for statistical use.

17. *Display of expiration date for OMB approval of information collection.* The Commission seeks an exemption from the requirement to display the OMB expiration date for this information collection. A list of all OMB-approved information collections, their corresponding expiration dates and OMB control numbers is displayed on OMB's website.

18. *Exception to certification statement for Paperwork Reduction Act submissions.* There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods:

The Commission does not anticipate that this revised collection of information will employ statistical methods, and the use of such methods would not reduce the burden or improve accuracy of results.