

Gov't plans to double available wireless spectrum

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President Barack Obama walks on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington upon arrival from the G20 Summit in Toronto Sunday, June 27, 2010, in Washington. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

(AP) -- The Obama administration intends to nearly double the available amount of wireless communications spectrum over the next 10 years in an effort to keep up with the ever-growing demand for high-speed video and data transmission to cell phones, laptops and other mobile devices.

President [Barack Obama](#) on Monday committed the federal government to auctioning off 500 megahertz of federal and commercial spectrum. Revenue from the auctions would be spent on public safety, infrastructure investments and deficit reduction.

In a memo to heads of federal agencies and departments, Obama said he wanted to unleash the full potential of wireless broadband and spur innovation.

"This new era in global technology leadership will only happen if there is adequate spectrum available to support the forthcoming myriad of wireless devices, networks and applications that can drive the new economy," Obama wrote.

National Economic Council director Lawrence H. Summers was to explain the new policy in a speech Monday at the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank. In an excerpt released by the White House, Summers said the initiative could "help to create hundreds of thousands of jobs."

The administration said it hopes to encourage the spread of [wireless broadband](#) across the country, including rural areas. The auction is intended, in part, to counter fears of a potential "spectrum crunch" as [smart phones](#) and laptop computers become more popular and new wireless devices hit the market.

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