

Government working on wireless spectrum inventory

July 14 2010, By JOELLE TESSLER , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Federal officials are beginning work on a comprehensive inventory of the nation's radio spectrum in hopes of finding more capacity for wireless high-speed Internet connections.

Federal Communications Commission Julius Genachowski said his agency is working closely with the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration to catalog current spectrum usage.

The FCC oversees spectrum allocated to commercial wireless carriers, as well as state and local spectrum uses. The NTIA manages spectrum use by federal agencies such as the Defense Department.

The FCC and NTIA hope to identify airwaves that could be reallocated for [wireless broadband services](#), including the cutting-edge 4G services now being rolled out by the big mobile carriers. The agencies also hope to promote wireless services that rely on unlicensed spectrum, such as Wi-Fi.

The spectrum inventory marks the first step toward implementing one of the key recommendations in the FCC's national broadband plan: a proposal to free up another 500 megahertz of spectrum over the next 10 years. The wireless industry currently holds roughly 500 [megahertz](#) of spectrum.

The FCC says more airwaves are needed to keep up with ever-growing

demand for sophisticated mobile applications accessed through laptops and smart phones such as Apple Inc.'s [iPhone](#). The FCC plan also envisions wireless as a way to bring high-speed Internet access to remote corners of the country where phone and cable companies do not offer landline broadband connections.

The FCC's spectrum proposal has the backing of the White House, which has also called for a spectrum inventory. Congress, too, is working on legislation that would mandate a spectrum inventory.

Genachowski outlined the FCC's plans in a letter Wednesday to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John D. Rockefeller, D-W.Va.

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