

Notice No. SMSE-018-17  
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***Consultation on the Technical and Policy Framework for White Space  
Devices, Notice No. SMSE-018-17***

**Comments  
of  
SHAW COMMUNICATIONS INC.**



**February 15, 2018**

## I. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The following constitutes the initial comments of Shaw Communications Inc. (“Shaw”) to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (the “Department” or “ISED”) in connection with the proceeding initiated by *Consultation on the Technical and Policy Framework for White Space Devices*, Notice No. SMSE-018-17 (the “Consultation Document”).
2. As alluded to in the Consultation Document, this proceeding has been initiated as a result of the Department’s repurposing of the 600 MHz band to allow for commercial mobile use. As Shaw stated in its comments in the Department’s *Consultation on a Technical, Policy and Licensing Framework for Spectrum in the 600 MHz Band* (SLPB-005-17), we applaud this decision to take a significant step toward alleviating the high demand for low-band spectrum for commercial mobile use. If the Department adopts a substantial set-aside for new competitors in that proceeding, as detailed in our comments, consumers will benefit greatly from the resulting increased competition in the market.
3. As the Department prepares the band for this re-purposing, it is important that other services, including white space devices, are appropriately re-allocated, as acknowledged in the Consultation Document. The Department must ensure that services are protected from interference and that spectrum is efficiently utilized to maximize the public’s benefit from this important, finite resource, consistent with the Government’s mandate as articulated in the *Spectrum Policy Framework for Canada* (“SPFC”).
4. In Shaw’s view, based on the limited amount of information relating to demand for white space devices, such devices should be limited to one frequency allocation only. Shaw agrees with the Department’s proposal to limit the use of such white space devices to spectrum below 608 MHz.
5. Once there is demonstrated demand for these services and evidence of capacity exhaust, additional spectrum could be considered for allocation at that time. This would create an opportunity to allocate more spectrum to services that have a demonstrated positive impact on Canadians and the Canadian economy. Moreover, in Shaw’s view, it is crucial that the Department focus on continuing to move forward in striving to meet demand for

commercial mobile wireless spectrum, including the crucial 600 MHz, 3.5 GHz, and millimetre wave bands.

## II. RESPONSES TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**Q1** — ISED is seeking comments on its proposal to harmonize with the U.S. framework regarding the operation of fixed white space devices in channels 3 and 4 (60-72 MHz).

**Q2** – ISED is seeking comments on its proposal to harmonize with the U.S. framework regarding the operation of personal/portable white space devices in channels 14 to 20 (470-512 MHz).

6. Shaw commends ISED's extensive efforts since 2012 related to white space devices. However, there is very limited information about the growth of white-spaces, demand statistics, capacity exhaust, the number of customers served, and the geographical areas where demand exceeds capacity. Moreover, we are not aware of how many white space devices have been approved.
7. In light of the above, and in particular the lack of demonstrated spectrum demand for use by such devices, Shaw recommends a minor deviation from the U.S. framework. Shaw notes that although Canada often seeks to align with the U.S., exceptions are often justified, such as where unique Canadian needs demand those exceptions.
8. Specifically, allocation of spectrum for white space devices should be done gradually. The most efficient approach would be for the Department to allocate only one of the contemplated frequency ranges, and after sufficient demand has been demonstrated, the Department could then consider whether to allocate another frequency range for use by white space devices. At this time, there is minimal evidence that these services require two separate, large frequency ranges across Canada.
9. Other services, particularly mobile wireless, backhaul, and satellite are experiencing tremendous growth. For example, over 30 million Canadians subscribe to mobile wireless services. These Canadians are eagerly awaiting the benefits of the planned release of 600 MHz spectrum to improve their coverage, as well as the future release of 3500 MHz spectrum to provide capacity to meet the exponential growth in demand for mobile data.

In the meantime, consumers in the U.S. and internationally are already enjoying services in these bands, and are looking forward to the imminent launch of 5G services. In light of these developments, we believe that the Department should be focusing on the efficient, expeditious release of such commercial mobile spectrum. Additionally, our proposal would create a future opportunity to allocate more valuable low-frequency spectrum to such services.

**Q3** — ISED is seeking comments regarding its proposal to limit the use of white space devices to spectrum below 608 MHz at this time.

**Q4** – ISED is seeking comments on its proposal to continue to preclude the use of channel 37 (608-614 MHz) by white space devices.

10. Shaw is in favour of the Department's proposal to limit the use of white space devices to spectrum below 608 MHz and to continue to preclude the use of channel 37 by white space devices. In Shaw's view, these proposals recognize the importance of minimizing interference concerns with future mobile wireless users.
11. However, as noted, we recommend that white space devices be limited to one frequency allocation only, and once there is demonstrated demand for these services and capacity exhaust, additional spectrum should be considered for allocation at that time.

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