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Microsoft is currently lobbying Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for free spectrum – or airwaves – to operate unlicensed devices. Microsoft claims this would unlock broadband for rural America, but it won't. Instead, it will put rural Americans' lifeline local TV service at risk.

Microsoft has been promising rural broadband for nearly a decade, but has failed to deliver.

- This is not a new proposal. Microsoft also asked for, and was given, free access to airwaves in 2008.
- The FCC also granted unlicensed devices the ability to operate at higher powers and closer to television stations to help deployment.
- Now Microsoft is pulling a bait and switch. The company promised innovation and investment, but now claims that the spectrum access it has already been given isn't good enough. Now Microsoft wants to take away channels from television stations with no promise to offer anything in their place. This harms television viewers throughout the country with no promise that broadband service will ever be offered.
- Groups representing rural Americans are not falling for it. Cattlemen, wheat growers, agri-women and state agriculture departments are opposing Microsoft's spectrum grab because they recognize how vital local broadcasting is for rural communities.

The airwaves Microsoft wants aren't "vacant."

- Microsoft claims the airwaves they want for free are "vacant channels," but if that were the case, no changes would be needed to current rules.
- Microsoft can *already* use unused television channels to provide rural broadband service. There are two unused channels in every television market available for this use and immense spectrum available in other bands.
- Instead, Microsoft is currently lobbying for a spectrum giveaway at the expense of rural Americans' lifeline local TV service.
- There is no connection between Microsoft's request for reserving space for very low-power devices in urban markets and its promises of high-power deployment in rural markets.

Microsoft could have bought spectrum to ensure its ability to provide a rural broadband service without jeopardizing rural television service.

- Recently, the FCC held an auction of the broadcast airwaves to make more channels available for wireless services. Microsoft chose not to purchase airwaves in that auction, but is now asking the FCC to give it airwaves at no cost and on better terms.
- As a result of the auction, the amount of airwaves available for local TV is shrinking. Nearly 1,000 TV stations are currently being moved to new channels to make room for wireless services.

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# Congress Should Reject Microsoft's Spectrum Grab

- As part of this process, many low-power TV stations and translators, which help carry the signals farther and bring TV service to rural America, are being forced off the air. Viewers are already at risk of losing critical local news, emergency, weather and community information. Microsoft's plan to set aside more airwaves for unlicensed devices would further harm viewers in this process.
- While Microsoft could use other bands of spectrum, low-power TV stations and translators have nowhere else to go, leaving their viewers in the dark.

## The bottom line:

Don't harm television viewers to give a \$700 billion company a handout.

- Even rural groups oppose a spectrum giveaway to Microsoft that comes at the expense of vital television services viewers rely on today.
- Reject Microsoft's spectrum grab and ensure your constituents have access to the critical news and emergency information local TV stations provide.