House Committee Passes Spectrum Incentive and FCC Reform Acts

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The House Energy & Commerce Committee today passed through H.R. 3674, the Federal Spectrum Incentive Act of 2013 and H.R. 3675, the Federal Communications Commission Process Reform Act. Both bills were introduced on Monday.

Resolution 3675, authored by Chairman Greg Walden and Subcommittee Ranking Member Anna Eshoo (D-CA), passed with an amendment representing “a bipartisan compromise that presents the commission with a framework to bring additional transparency and predictability to the FCC.”

The bill hopes to speed things up at the FCC by requiring the Commission to set deadlines on some routine actions and to keep Congress and the public up to date on the progress of meeting those deadlines.

FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai said in a statement [1], “All too often, proceedings at the FCC drag on for many years, leaving consumers and businesses alike waiting for the Commission to make a decision. This legislation adopts common-sense reforms that would help us become more responsive.”

AT&T cheered the forward movement of the bill [2] on its public policy blog.

“These much needed institutional reforms will help arm the agency with the tools to keep pace with the Internet speed of today’s marketplace,” the company stated. “It will also ensure that outmoded regulatory practices for today’s competitive marketplace are properly placed in the dustbin of history.”

The committee approval of Resolution 3674, authored by U.S. Representatives Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Doris Matsui (D-CA), garnered support from both CTIA and CCA.

The bill aims to free up valuable spectrum held by governmental agencies [3] that’s underutilized or not used at all.

CTIA said in a statement, “[The] bill provides a creative way to repurpose federal spectrum that isn’t being utilized or used efficiently and in doing so will help the commercial mobile industry gain access to spectrum it needs to maintain America’s place as the world’s leader in wireless broadband service.”

CCA President & CEO Steven K. Berry also applauded the passage.

“Competitive carriers desperately need access to additional spectrum to meet the ever growing consumer demand for more wireless broadband. Ensuring spectrum is used efficiently is absolutely critical. I thank Congress for its attention to this

important issue and support its passage," Berry wrote.

FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel on Twitter complimented Representatives Guthrie and Matsui on the bill and quipped, "Carrots work better than sticks! [4]"

Both bills now move onto the House for approval.

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