

## **Report: Possible Sprint/T-Mobile Deal Would Spark FCC Auction Rule Redo**

Ben Munson

If SoftBank-owned Sprint goes ahead with its plans to bid for T-Mobile, it would cause the FCC to re-evaluate and possibly change its rules for the upcoming 600 MHz incentive auctions.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler has reportedly proposed limitations for AT&T and Verizon Wireless, who together hold the majority of available low-band spectrum licenses. But the FCC based its rules on “current market structure” and would reconsider if a Sprint-T-Mobile tie-up proceeded, [according to a Reuters report](#) [1].

The FCC is currently planning to set aside up to 30 MHz in each market for smaller carriers to bid on once bidding for those markets hits a set threshold. After the threshold it hit, carriers holding at least one-third of the low-band spectrum in that market wouldn't be allowed to bid. AT&T has railed against the proposed limitations, saying it could limit them from bidding in markets covering 70 percent of the population. AT&T has gone so far to say it might [not participate in the 600 MHz auctions](#) [2] if such limitations are put in place.

AT&T may get its wish for an open auction should Sprint go after T-Mobile.

Although no official announcement has been made, SoftBank CEO and Sprint Chairman Masayoshi Son has openly declared there is a need for Sprint and T-Mobile to join forces in order to compete with AT&T and Verizon.

The potential merger has been [met with skepticism](#) [3] from regulators who applaud the current U.S. wireless market landscape, with four large competitors, and wish to maintain the field.

### **Source URL (retrieved on 01/31/2015 - 8:09am):**

<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/04/report-possible-sprint/t-mobile-deal-would-spark-fcc-auction-rule-redo>

### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/17/us-softbank-sprint-tmobile-idUSBREA3G25B20140417>

[2] <http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/04/t-warns-fcc-it-might-skip-600-mhz-auction-over-spectrum-rules>

[3] <http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/02/report-fcc-%E2%80%9Chighly-skeptical%E2%80%9D-possible-sprint-t-mobile-merger>

