

AT&T Balks at CCA's Attempt to Exempt Smaller Carriers from Auction Rules

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AT&T is calling double standard on the Competitive Carriers Association as it looks to exempt its members from proposed rules limiting bidding in upcoming spectrum auctions.

“Where their members have significant low band holdings and are subject to auction restrictions, it’s an ‘unintended consequence.’ Where AT&T or Verizon have the same amount of low band holdings and are subject to auction restrictions, it’s because our low band holdings are ‘excessive,’” AT&T Vice President of Federal Regulatory Joan Marsh [wrote in a blog post](#) [1].

As the FCC shapes the rules for the 600 MHz incentive auctions planned for 2015, it’s considering barring bidders based on how much low-band spectrum they hold on a per-market basis. Up to 30 MHz of spectrum in each market could be restricted for bidders holding more than one-third of the available low-band spectrum in that market.

AT&T and Verizon would bear most of the brunt of this policy, but some smaller rural and regional carriers like U.S. Cellular would also be barred from bidding in some markets.

To that end, the CCA has asked the FCC to only limit carriers that exceed the low-band spectrum threshold [on both a local geographic and national level](#) [2]. This would effectively exempt those smaller carriers from the bidding limits since AT&T and Verizon together own the vast majority of low-band spectrum available nationwide.

Marsh called the CCA’s new argument further indication that low-band spectrum limits have been called for by carriers “seeking little more than auction advantages and preferences – and an auction environment where they can bid free from robust bidding competition.”

AT&T had previously [hinted at skipping the 600 MHz auctions](#) [3] over the proposed rules but has since indicated its continued interest in participating.

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<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2014/05/t-balks-cca%E2%80%99s-attempt-exempt-smaller-carriers-auction-rules>

Links:

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[1] <http://www.attpublicpolicy.com/fcc/more-on-the-low-band-spectrum-debate/>

[2] <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7521102394>

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