January 18, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Assignment of Licenses to Verizon Wireless from SpectrumCo and Cox TMI Wireless, LLC
WT Docket No. 12-4

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless ("Verizon") has filed two applications with the Commission seeking consent to the proposed assignment of licenses in the Advanced Wireless Servicess ("AWS") from SpectrumCo, LLC ("SpectrumCo") and Cox TMI Wireless, LLC ("Cox Wireless"). The acquisition of significant additional spectrum by the nation’s largest wireless carrier, by itself, warrants public involvement and scrutiny by the Commission. The applications, however, demonstrate that this spectrum transfer is part of a larger business transaction between actual and potential competitors. Without the ability to review the larger transaction in its entirety, it is impossible to assess whether there will be public interest harms associated with this proposed transfer. Accordingly, we seek the Commission’s assistance in acquiring the information necessary to adequately evaluate the proposed transactions and relationships and provide input that would assist the Commission in its evaluation of the applications.

As the applications relate, SpectrumCo is owned by Comcast Corporation ("Comcast"), the nation’s largest cable Multiple System Operator ("MSO"), Time Warner Cable, Inc., the second largest cable MSO, and Bright House Networks, LLC. Cox Wireless is a subsidiary of Cox Communications, Inc., the nation’s third largest cable MSO. Verizon is majority owned by Verizon Communications, Inc., a dominant incumbent local exchange carrier

1 Application of Verizon and SpectrumCo, ULS File No. 0004993617, filed December 21, 2011 (the “SpectrumCo Application”); and Application of Verizon and Cox Wireless, ULS File No. 0004996680, filed December 21, 2011 (the “Cox Application”). The Commission has opened WT Docket No. 12-4 for its evaluation of these applications but has not yet issued a Public Notice accepting them for filing and seeking comment on these applications. DA 12-35, released January 11, 2012. Verizon and Leap Wireless International Inc. also filed indirectly related applications for the assignment of other AWS and Personal Communications Service licenses earlier in December: ULS Files No. 0004942973, 0004942992, 0004952444,0004949596, and 0004949598.
and itself the seventh largest Multichannel Video Programming Distributor (“MVPD”) in the United States.2

Verizon and Comcast have announced that the SpectrumCo owners and Verizon have “entered into several agreements, providing for the sale of various products and services.” Through these agreements, the companies “will become agents to sell one another’s products and, over time, the cable companies will have the option of selling Verizon Wireless’ service on a wholesale basis. Additionally, the cable companies and Verizon Wireless have formed an innovation technology joint venture for the development of technology to better integrate wireline and wireless products and services.”3 These brief explanations of the several agreements indicate that major communications companies, which directly compete against one another in the provision of a variety of services to consumers and businesses, have now formed cooperative alliances that could affect, in addition to the market for mobile wireless services, the provision of multichannel video programming and broadband services, including dedicated private lines and high-speed Internet access. The assignment of CMRS spectrum represented by the applications appears to be only one small part of what could be a significant realignment of the competitive landscape in these industries.

Accordingly, we believe that the applications in this proceeding can only be fairly reviewed in the entirety of the proposed transactions. We request that the Commission direct the applicants to produce for review by interested parties all of the several agreements referred to in Verizon’s SEC filing, Comcast’s press release, and any similar agreements between Verizon and Cox, along with any applicable schedules and supporting documentation necessary for the Commission and the public to fully grasp and understand the scope of the transactions and ongoing agreements.4

Thank you for your consideration and assistance in this matter. We look forward to providing the Commission with informed and incisive input as it evaluates these applications.

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2 Rankings based on the number of Basic Video Subscribers as of September, 2011, reported by the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, http://www.ncta.com/Stats/TopMSOs.aspx.


4 The Commission has adopted Protective Orders in this proceeding to limit access to information that is “Confidential” or “Highly Confidential.” DA 12-50 and DA 12-51, released January 17, 2012.
Sincerely,

C Spire Wireless
/s/ Eric Graham
Sr. VP, Strategic Relations
1018 Highland Parkway, Ste 330
Ridgeland, MS 39157
(601) 974-7771

DirectTV
/s/ Susan M. Eid
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs
901 F Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 383-6300

New America Foundation
/s/ Michael Calabrese
Director, Wireless Future Project
Open Technology Initiative
1899 L St., NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 986-2700

Public Knowledge
/s/ Harold Feld
Legal Director
1818 N Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 861-0020

T-Mobile USA, Inc.
/s/ Kathleen O’Brien Ham
Vice President, Federal Regulatory Affairs
601 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, N. Bldg. Ste 800
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 654-5900

Consumer Federation of America
/s/ Mark Cooper
Director of Research
1620 I Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 387-6121

Media Access Project
/s/ Andrew Schwartzman
Senior Vice President and Policy Director
1625 K Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 232-4300

NTELOS Holdings Corp.
/s/ Brian J. O’Neil
Sr. VP, General Counsel & Secretary
1154 Shenandoah Village Drive
Waynesboro, VA 22980
(540) 946-2058

Sprint Nextel Corporation
/s/ Charles W. McKee
VP, Government Affairs
900 Seventh Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
(703) 592-7955
cc: Commissioner McDowell
    Commissioner Clyburn
    Rick Kaplan, Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
    William T. Lake, Chief, Media Bureau
    Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel
    Joel Taubenblatt, Spectrum and Competition Policy Division
    Sandra Danner, Broadband Division
    Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel
    Joel Taubenblatt, Spectrum and Competition Policy Division
    Michael Samsock, Cellco Partnership
    Christina H. Burrow, Esq., Dow Lohnes PLLC
    Michael G. Jones, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP
    Best Copy and Printing, Inc., FCC@BCPIWEB.COM