

**Report of the Ad Hoc HF Band Planning Committee
ARRL Board of Directors
January 2012**

5 mHz R&O and resultant tasking background

In [arrl-odv:20325] of 21 November CEO Sumner summarized effects of the just-released FCC 5 mHz Report & Order, the gist of which we had been aware of for a while. While the wait for this R&O has been long, the wait for publication in the Federal Register continues as of January 5. Consequently the 30 day clock to implementation of the new rules has yet to start.

Our committee has been tasked by President Craigie [arrl-odv:20328] 22 November with submitting a Best Practices document and a band (channel) plan or guideline proposal to the board, to float to the user community prior to the effective date of the new rules. The notion of creating a channel plan *prior to* commencement of the sweeping mode changes and resultant shift of usage patterns and loading is on one hand seemingly out of order, and a daunting prospect. On the other hand the status quo of USB only on 60 meters will come to an abrupt change fairly soon, and it behooves us as the US membership society to provide some level of leadership in setting groundwork for usage of the new privileges, as well as publicizing the opportunities and pitfalls created thereby. In fact FCC expects this of ARRL and provides some guidance in Footnote 46 of the R&O. Any channel plan that is promulgated should likely carry the understanding that it will be subject to near-term updating based on loading patterns.

R&O less than ideal as regards cw and data liberalization

The utility of cw and data modes in the five channels will be severely cramped due to insistence that emissions take place on channel centers. This is NOT good stewardship of limited resources but is out of our and apparently FCC's hands due to concerns of the primary government users of the 5 mHz band. It derives from their need to be able to assume usage of channels on short notice {see pages 12-13 of Counsel Imlay's report Doc. 12 [arrl-odv:20408] of 4 January}. It's also a reminder that it is incumbent on amateurs to use practices that enable us to relinquish a channel when government users appear. If we maintain our good record of so doing it can be hoped that in future we may be able to earn the use of multiple cw and data 'sub-channels' and possibly even gain access to a traditional spectrum span at 5 mHz.

Committee methodology

The committee has a dedicated email reflector. On 15 December a GoToMeeting conference was held with all committee members plus Emergency Preparedness Manager and Assistant Mike Corey K11U and Ken Bailey K1FUG, and Emergency Communications Advisory Committee members Jim Cross WI3N (Atlantic) and Glen Reid K5FX (West Gulf) participating. At this meeting we decided to seek member input via a special email repository and a Zoomerang survey. A recap of the coming changes at 60M and our desire to collect member and user views was put on the ARRL website 20 December at <http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-requests-feedback-for-60-meter-band-plan> As of 5 January over thirty emails have been received and around 300 surveys have been taken.

In addition to polling users and consulting with ARRL's Emergency Preparedness and Response department, we have sought input from a few well-known 60M advocates and former Chief Technology Officer Paul Rinaldo W4RI.

Committee work product

The fact that Federal Register publication has not yet occurred made possible plans for an in-person meeting of our committee prior to the board meeting. This will take place Wednesday 11 January at 1PM in the W1AW attic. The board family is invited to sit in. My intention is that we will offer a motion, or a selection of models to choose from, for the board's consideration at our annual meeting. Considering that the 30-day window to rules implementation has yet to start, we might elect to delay submitting our output to the board if we can't develop a good recommendation Wednesday. But it would be unfortunate to miss the chance for the board to discuss and vote on this in-person. Either way, more information will be forthcoming at the board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
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