UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PRELIMINARY VIEWS ON WRC-11

AGENDA ITEM 1.23: to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415-526.5 kHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services

BACKGROUND:

The band 415-526.5 kHz is largely allocated to the maritime mobile and aeronautical radionavigation services with some variances in their allocations between the three ITU Regions. Maritime Safety Information (MSI) systems operate on 490 kHz and 518 kHz (NAVTEX).

The principal interest of the amateur radio service in this band lies in its unique propagation properties, which are different from those in the 135 kHz and 1800 kHz bands. For example, the band allows for propagation unaffected by ionospheric disturbances and sunspot cycle variations. This characteristic would prove invaluable in the continuing development by radio amateurs of dependable emergency communications.

Worldwide, the amateur service successfully shares spectrum as a secondary user to the fixed service between 10.100 and 10.150 MHz. In some countries around the world, amateurs utilize specific channels between 5.25 and 5.45 MHz on a secondary basis sharing with the primary fixed and mobile services. The primary interference avoidance technique on these bands has been a listen-before-transmit protocol, supplemented by appropriate regulatory power limitations. These techniques have led to successful sharing arrangements.

ITU-R WP5B is considering existing and future requirements for ship and port security and maritime safety systems in existing maritime mobile service spectrum. Other studies in the 415-526.5 kHz range are addressing the provision of future systems enhancing safety of navigation at sea (e-navigation applications).

Studies assessing the 415-526.5 kHz range for new allocations must also consider future Differential Global Positioning System (dGPS) requirements. Operations in the 285-325 kHz bands are at capacity now, and maritime mobile service bands in the 415-510 kHz range will likely accommodate future requirements.

ISSUES:

The issue is whether to allocate spectrum on a secondary basis to the amateur service in the band 415-526 kHz; and how to protect existing services in the band from harmful interference. The ITU-R needs to study the potential impact on other users in the band, and whether the spectrum in the secondary allocation needs to be contiguous.

1 ITU-R Working Party 5B, Reply Liaison Statement to Working Party 5A, Copies to Working Parties 5C, 6A on Studies Related to WRC-11 Agenda Item 1.23, Document 5A/189, 17 November 2008. At its thirteenth session, the International Maritime Organization’s Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) noted the liaison statement. At the previous meeting, COMSAR had expressed concern about maintaining access to the 415-526.5 kHz band (COMSAR 13/14, 6 February 2009, §§ 4.74-4.75).
PRELIMINARY VIEWS:

U.S. VIEW: The United States supports the allocation of about 15 kHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis in the band 415-526.5 kHz provided that appropriate ITU-R sharing studies demonstrate compatibility of this allocation with the existing services, including the maritime mobile service.