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NTIA Report Lays Groundwork for Responsible Deployment Of Broadband Over Power Lines (BPL)

Answers President's Call for New Broadband Technology Standards

A report issued today by the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) examines the potential interference to federal radio systems that could result from the deployment of broadband over power lines (BPL). The report concludes that "rigorous technical solutions" would protect critical federal systems and enable BPL to realize its promise as the "third broadband wire into the home."

"Yesterday, President Bush called for 'technical standards to make possible new broadband technologies, such as the use of high-speed communication directly over power lines'," said Acting NTIA Administrator Michael D. Gallagher. "Today, NTIA is meeting that challenge by providing the technical foundation for the responsible deployment of broadband over power lines. BPL has the potential to turn every electrical outlet into a broadband pipeline. Establishing responsible ground rules that address radio frequency interference concerns is a critical component of meeting that promise."

There are 59,000 federal radio frequency assignments in the affected bands of spectrum between 1.7 and 80 MHz. These frequencies provide multiple services including: fixed, mobile, radio astronomy, radar, and broadcasting. The NTIA report, which analyzed 10 million measurements of BPL systems, suggests mitigation techniques to protect these critical government radio systems. Among the solutions proposed in the report are: a notch solution for the most sensitive and severely impacted systems; local registration of BPL frequency use; intelligent power management; and the use of a Web-based interface for potentially impacted parties.

NTIA will complete a Phase 2 study later this year that will assess the potential interference risks due to aggregation and ionospheric propagation of interfering signals from BPL systems; refine and apply BPL deployment models; and evaluate the effectiveness of proposed Part 15 measurement techniques.

NTIA filed its report with the FCC in connection with a proceeding to amend the FCC's Part 15 Rules to allow broadband to be deployed over power lines. The report is available on the NTIA Web site at www.ntia.doc.gov.

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