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GAO Releases Report on Receiver Performance

February 25, 2013

On February 22, 2013, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report to Congress on how radio receiver performance affects spectrum management. This report was prepared pursuant to the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, which tasked GAO to study spectrum efficiency and receiver performance.

In fulfilling its requirement, GAO focused on four areas related to improving receiver performance, including (1) actions taken by manufacturers and commercial licensees, (2) actions taken by the federal government, (3) challenges and (4) options identified by stakeholders. To help formulate its views, GAO analyzed a sample of the following cases of actual or potential interference wherein receiver performance played or could play a role: cellular and public safety services in the 800 MHz band, satellite radio and wireless communication in the 2.3 GHz band and radar systems.

The report details three challenges to improving receiver performance identified by stakeholders:

- Lack of coordination across industries when developing voluntary standards.
- Lack of incentives for manufacturers or spectrum users to incur costs associated with using more robust receivers.
- Difficulty accommodating a changing spectrum environment.

The GAO recommends that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) consider collecting information on the practical effects of options to improve receiver performance. GAO acknowledges that the FCC has initiated such a fact-gathering process but questions whether those efforts are sufficient.

Practice Areas

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