



WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

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Web Page: www.westernstateswater.org

June 11, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) is a government entity created by the governors of the western states to advise them on water policy issues. In the past, the WSWC has expressed concerns about the use of radio spectrum for cell phone technology with the potential to interfere with data used by federal agencies and states to better understand and manage water resources, as well as assist emergency managers.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently engaged in a 24+ GHz spectrum auction to support 5G cellular phone networks. The use of this spectrum has the potential to bleed over and interfere with data in the adjacent spectrum, 23.6-24 GHz, which is used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to measure water vapor in the atmosphere. Due to the physical properties of the atmosphere, this is the only frequency band suitable for this measurement. Among the possible unintended consequences, the interference with or loss of this data could potentially impact short-term weather forecasts, impacting the ability of state and federal agencies to prepare for and respond to extreme weather events and associated precipitation, water supply, and flooding.

The WSWC supports data collection and distribution programs, including remote satellite sensing, that assist agencies at all levels of government in making sound scientific decisions related to water. The WSWC respectfully requests Congress appropriately address concerns about out-of-band interference. We appreciate the Committee's oversight, and ask that you ensure that the FCC coordinates with NOAA and other federal and state agencies to quantify and analyze the effects of 5G use on the adjacent spectrum, and take further steps as necessary to protect remote sensing in the 23.6-24 GHz range.

Sincerely,

Tony Willardson,
Executive Director
Western States Water Council