APSCC Confident Asian Governments Will Protect C-band

http://www.satellitetoday.com/regional/2015/09/23/apscc-confident-asian-governments-will-protect-c-band/

Paul Brown-Kenyon, president of APSCC and CEO of Measat

[Via Satellite 09-23-2015] Asian governments will likely stand with the satellite industry in defending a "no change" stance toward the reallocation of C-band — such is the hopeful expectation of the **Asia Pacific Satellite Communications Council** (APSCC), a non-profit international association of public and private satellite entities. The pressing return of the World Radiocommunication Conference this year, designated WRC-15, will bring together industry, governments and regulators to decide on spectrum issues, with conclusions regarding C-band (3.4 to 4.2 GHz) formin g the crux of satellite industry concerns.

WRC-15 takes place in Geneva, Switzerland this November but leaders from around the world have already held numerous regional meetings in preparation for the conference. The **Inter-American Telecommunication Commission** (CITEL) recently proposed allocating a portion of C-band from 3.4 to 3.6 GHz to the International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) industry, which says it needs more spectrum to accommodate the rapid growth of mobile services. The **European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations**' (CEPT) final WRC-prep meeting this year suggested 3.4 to 3.8GHz be dedicated to mobile broadband.

These dispositions add weight to the belief that the satellite industry will likely have to compromise on C-band at this year's WRC, compared to 2007's conference when the industry was able to keep the band largely intact. The Asia Pacific could offer more hope, however, for defense of the spectrum. Paul Brown-Kenyon, president of APSCC and CEO of **Measat**, told *Via Satellite* that regulators in the region are largely in support of keeping C-band as is.

"The recent 5th Meeting of the **APT Conference Preparatory Group** for WRC-15 (APG15-5) in Seoul, Korea from July 27 to August 1, concluded to a view of 'no change' on the C-band allocation for satellite services. Although a minority of countries supported IMT allocation in the C-band, the meeting forwarded to APT members a 'Preliminary APT Common Proposal for 'No Change' in the C-band.' We are now waiting for the member administrations to endorse this Asian Common Proposal," he said.

Brown-Kenyon warned, though, that the industry will need to continue to voice its concerns with APT countries to obtain a confirmed APT Common Proposal in support of no change. APSCC members are actively working to inform regulators about C-band and it's importance both to the satellite industry and overall telecommunications services.

Among supporters of APSCC in this mission are the **Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia** (CASBAA), the **Global VSAT Forum** (GVF), and the **European Satellite Operator's Association** (ESOA). John Medeiros, chief policy officer at CASBAA, told *Via Satellite* that C-band is of the utmost importance in Asia.

“C-band transmissions are vital — literally the arteries through which our blood flows — and there are no available substitutes,” he said.

Brown-Kenyon reaffirmed this point, stating that Asia has such diverse communications needs that C-band becomes arguably more important for this continent than other parts of the world.

“Highlighting C-band’s importance in Asia are the latest estimates indicating that half of satellite bandwidth utilized over Asia is in C-band compared to approximately 35 percent in other regions,” he said.

Asia, being home to more than 4 billion people, has a variety of geographies and communications needs. In many areas C-band is favored for its resilience against rain fade, compared to Ka or Ku frequencies. **Euroconsult** conducted a study released in June 2014 that described C-band in the Asia-Pacific as inimitable.

“The utilization of C-band for video contribution and cellular backhaul services has been one of the key enablers for Asia’s rural and underserved communities to receive video content and cellular service. These communities would not have been able to access these services affordably through terrestrial solutions for the foreseeable future,” explained Brown-Kenyon. “For video distribution, South East Asia alone — a region with mainly developing nations — has more than 38 million C-band TV Receive Only (TVRO) dishes, compared to the United States, which only has 1.75 million registered C-band TVROs. In the context of cellular services and based on market research estimates, Asia is the highest C-band consumer for telecom trunking at circa 260 transponders, whilst the closest region is Latin America with about 210.”

Undermining arguments by supporters of no change is the substantive but unquantified number of C-band terminals in several Asian nations. Brown-Kenyon said some administrations have taken steps to register these C-band terminals through mass notifications to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), but that this process has run into a snag.

“The ITU has encountered some difficulties in processing the mass notifications based on the relevant radio regulations and the Radio Regulations Board’s (RRB) rules of procedure and previous WRC decisions on this matter. Subsequently, the RRB requested the Radiocommunication Bureau to provide additional information on the anticipated difficulties and the impact on the ITU in treating such notices. This issue is expected to be addressed at WRC-15 as the Radiocommunication Bureau has reported this matter to the conference through the report of the director. The satellite industry needs to carefully follow this issue during WRC-15 in order to develop a mechanism for the treatment of notification of such earth stations by ITU,” he said.

Nonetheless, confidence remains that C-band is valued in its current roll throughout the majority of the continent.

“I think Asian governments can see quite clearly where their own interests lie, and that does not mean giving up frequencies that are vital to hundreds of millions of ordinary Asian viewers in order to placate relatively wealthy ‘roamers’ from Europe and America,” said Medeiros, adding that the growth of triple play offerings — where voice, data and video are provided together — has increased the reliance on C-band. Consumer video demand is rising sharply, and even with much of that video going over Internet and mobile broadband connections, IMT will be unable to meet all of this demand. What the satellite industry needs to do in the weeks between now and WRC-15, according to Medeiros, is get noticed.

“The satellite industry’s challenge has always been that it is too invisible,” he explained. “It hums away in the background, providing efficient and reliable service, and most people just don’t know that when they pick up their device, or switch on their TV, or step up to their ATM, the supporting data flows are coming over satellite. We couldn’t live as well as we do without satellites, and the challenge is to make those benefits understood by the billions of people around the world who enjoy them — and by their governments!”