FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Parts 2, 15, 90 and 95
[ET Docket No. 19–138; Report No. 3176; FR ID 35413]

Automatic Identification System Channels

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: In this document, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) fulfills the Commission’s statutory duty pursuant to Section 8416 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which directs the Commission to initiate a rulemaking proceeding by June 30, 2021 to consider whether to authorize devices used to mark fishing equipment for use on Automatic Identification System (AIS) channels. This document seeks comment on the extent to which the 1900–2000 kHz band is used to support fishing operations, the extent of unauthorized deployment of devices used to mark fishing equipment using AIS technology on AIS channels, and whether to authorize devices used to mark fishing equipment for use on current AIS channels. In addition, the NPRM explores whether 160.900 MHz is a viable alternative for devices used to mark fishing equipment. In the event the Commission were to authorize devices used to mark fishing equipment to use AIS channels or 160.900 MHz, the NPRM seeks comment on whether there are technical and operational constraints that could be imposed to maintain maritime safety and protect incumbents. Finally, the NPRM seeks comment on a consumer labeling approach for authorized equipment to provide consumers guidance on whether the equipment being purchased complies with both the Coast Guard’s and the Commission’s rules.

DATES: Interested parties may file comments on or before August 6, 2021; and reply comments on or before September 7, 2021.

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DATES:

1. These docket proceedings were initiated by the Commission’s rulemaking proceeding in WT Docket No. 21–69A1. The NPRM and associated comments and oppositions are available at http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/. The Commission will not send a hardcopy of the NPRM to any of the following: Petitioners; parties in the Commission’s rulemaking proceeding; and the Commission’s rules.

2. Effective March 19, 2020, and until further notice, the Commission no longer accepts any hand or messenger delivered filings. This is a temporary measure taken to help protect the health and safety of individuals, and to mitigate the transmission of COVID–19. See FCC Announces Closure of FCC Headquarters Open Window and Change in Hand-Delivery Policy, Public Notice, DA 20–304 (March 19, 2020), https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-closes-headquarters-open-window-and-changes-hand-delivery-policy.

3. People with Disabilities. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202–418–0432 (tty), 202–418–0530 (voice), and 202–418–0422 (text).