

Auctioning the D-Block

FCC says Congress didn't provide funds for public safety airwaves.

All five members of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took some heat Tuesday over the lackluster response to the public safety D-block spectrum auction, but the commissioners placed some of the blame on Congress and its failure to allocate adequate funding for the project.

"Congress has not yet passed any law that would require funding to go to the public safety networks," FCC Chairman Kevin Martin said during a House Energy and Commerce Internet and Telecom subcommittee hearing on the 700-MHz auction.

The preferable option would be to fund and build a public safety network with federal dollars, but without that option, a public-private partnership was the only alternative, Martin said.

"Congress has some responsibility too," said Democratic Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein.