

HF Band Planning Committee Mid-Year Report 2024
July 2024 - ARRL Board Meeting

Kristen McIntyre, K6WX, Chair
Mike Ritz, W7VO, Member
Ed Hudgens, WB4RHQ, Member
Dave Propper, K2DP, Member
Ned Stearns, AA7A, Member

This is a report of the activities of the 2024 HF Band Planning Committee to inform the ARRL Board of Directors at the midpoint of its 2024 service. The report will cover any activities to date.

The HF Band Planning Committee got off to a slow start given the low probability of action on the part of the FCC to any requests for band / mode allocation changes. As evidence of that lack of action, there are still two pending petitions for rule making that have not had action after several years.

- RM-11828: expanded Technician Class licensing proposal, filed in 2018
- RM-11759: amendment to facilitate HF data communication, filed in 2016

In addition, the Information Technology (IT) disruption consumed the time of both HQ Staff and the Board. In light of this, a meeting did not occur until recently.

Meeting

A meeting of the Committee was held in mid-July to set an agenda for the second half of 2024, despite the dim prospects of FCC action. In attendance were First Vice President McIntyre, Chair, Vice Director Hudgens, Vice Director Propper, and Vice Director Stearns. Second Vice President Ritz was absent due to a heroic vehicle rescue that required his personal attention.

At the meeting, the Committee reviewed the last substantive report from the Committee (July 2020) and a previous presentation (Rev 4) that was prepared for presentation to the Board contemporaneously with the report. Vice Director Stearns spoke to the history of this proposal for reformulating the band plan and the reasoning behind it.

It was agreed that the previously presented band plan was a good starting point, but that many things have changed around new digital modes since its creation. Removal of the symbol rate restriction (RM-11708 / 16-239) has further changed the band allocation landscape. There was general agreement that a more laissez-faire approach to band / mode allocation was worth pursuing. The lack of disruption from the symbol rate change, despite dire predictions, and the approach of other countries to band planning (e.g. Canada) are encouraging for this direction.

Lastly, Vice Director Propper noted that there are some inconsistencies in the published band plans on the ARRL website that may need correcting.

Plans

It was agreed to meet more regularly in the second half of 2024 to look into a more updated band allocation proposal.

Vice Director Stearns was tasked with gathering considerations for digital operating frequencies through his many connections to ongoing projects in the DX-ing space. Vice Director Propper was tasked with gathering a complete list of band plan documentation on the ARRL website that is inconsistent or incomplete.

The Committee will meet again in August to pursue further research in this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen A McIntyre, K6WX, Chair
HF Band Planning Committee