

HF Band Planning Committee End of Year Report 2024  
January 2025 - 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 end of its 2024 service. The report will cover activities through the year.

The HF Band Planning Committee was fairly active in the second half of 2024, with meetings every 2 months.

Once again we have nothing to report on any action at the FCC regarding the two major proposals that would affect band planning.

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

This is highly disappointing to all of us. It is hoped that with the incipient changes to FCC leadership things will improve. Even if the desire is there with new staff and leaders to move things forward, it will likely take a significant amount of time before the new staff is in place and active, so the outlook remains sadly negative.

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## Proposed Band Plan

Much time was devoted to reviewing and discussing the previously proposed band plan (Rev 4 from July 2020) from prior years. Second Vice President Ritz and Vice Director Stearns brought their institutional knowledge and context from the development of that proposed band plan to bear on this review.

While the removal of the symbol rate restriction (RM-11708 / 16-239) has already resulted in change in some operating modes and practices (specifically FT8's Superfox mode), we agreed that this has not affected the proposed band plan in any significant way.

The sense of the Committee is that if and when the FCC becomes more responsive to Amateur Service changes, the previously proposed band plan should form the basis for any filings we might make.

As for more informal band plans on HF or VHF and above, and despite this being the *HF* Band Planning Committee, we continue to recommend a *laissez-faire* approach to band / mode allocation. Removal of the symbol rate limit and replacing it with a bandwidth limit *only* for HF (no limits for VHF) has shown that catastrophic predictions were unfounded. Amateur Radio

operators were able to find a way to cooperate on their now expanded bandwidth privileges without harmful interference in almost all cases.

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## Region 3 40 Meter Proposal

The Committee was made aware by Vice Director Hudgens of a proposed 40 meter band plan from IARU Region 3. We collectively assessed that this proposal would cause significant disruption to common operating practices on 40 meters, particularly for digital modes. Vice Director Hudgens engaged in conversations with IARU Secretary Joel Harrison and ARRL President Rick Roderick to see if this proposal was a significant threat. The conclusion was that it is unlikely to be implemented in its current form and unlikely to be adopted in the short or medium term. It is something that should be monitored, however.

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## 40 Meter Net Listings

It was noted by Second Vice President Ritz that the Net listings on the ARRL website, particularly 40 meters, seemed stale. An effort has been made to see how staff at HQ handle these net listings and how they are aged out. This is an ongoing effort that the 2025 Committee will have to continue.

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## Inconsistent Band Plan Documents

Vice Director Propper has noted that there are some inconsistencies in the published band plans on the ARRL website that may need correcting. At this point these have not been addressed with staff. This will be work that the 2025 HF Band Planning Committee can address.

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## Summary

The 2024 HF Band Planning Committee made some progress in picking up the work that was done previously to propose a new and more modernized HF band plan. Digital modes have not had a significant impact on this proposal thus far.

Beyond this, the Committee got some housekeeping done and monitored the IARU Region 3 proposal.

The Chair wants to express her deep gratitude to all of the members of the 2024 HF Band Planning Committee for their participation and devotion to the furtherance of cooperative operating on the HF bands.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen A McIntyre, K6WX, Chair

HF Band Planning Committee