

NEWS | FUTURE OUTLOOK

Elon's Fourth Carrier: SpaceX Spectrum Deal Rattles US Telecom

SpaceX is buying a nationwide block of low-band airwaves for Starlink Mobile

By **Manasee Kurlekar** | October 9, 2026



SpaceX has bought its way into the mobile business.

Late Thursday in the US (overnight in India), SpaceX agreed to buy all of Grain Management's nationwide 800 MHz spectrum.

That's up to 14 MHz of paired low-band airwaves, which Grain bought from T-Mobile earlier this year. Neither side disclosed the price. Bloomberg had earlier reported the licences could be worth around \$6 billion, with AST SpaceMobile also bidding.

Why does 800 MHz matter? Low-band signals travel far and get through walls, and SpaceX says most phones already support the band. SpaceX plans to pair the spectrum with its direct-to-phone satellite network and build out on the ground. The goal is coverage indoors, outdoors and in dead zones. That's the job a cellphone company does. Towers aren't going anywhere, but "we cover everywhere," long the incumbents' biggest selling point, may not be theirs for much longer. That claim will belong to SpaceX services.

The market's verdict came fast. In after-hours trading, AT&T fell about 7%, Verizon about 5% and T-Mobile 5-7%. That sentiment will be apparent continuing today.

There's one hurdle left: the deal still needs final approval from the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The WBW take: Telecom investors have long treated satellites as a niche backup. A satellite operator that also owns licensed spectrum is a direct rival. Carriers worldwide, from Dallas to Mumbai, will be watching to see if this becomes a template.

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