

## SCRPS Status Update

FCC Form 5640

OMB Control No. 3060-1270

File No. SC-SU0003217

### Applicant Information

Applicant FRN 0001754209

Applicant Address 3984 County Rd 32

Applicant Name Pine Belt Cellular, Inc.

Applicant City Arlington

Applicant Email cores@pinebelt.net

Applicant State AL

Applicant Phone 3343855000

Applicant ZIP Code 36722

### Contact Information



Is the contact the same as the contact listed on the Application Request for Funding Allocation? If not, please list below.

Contact Name Sam Hariton

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Contact Email sc.external.rfi.pinebelt@widel

Contact City Fairfax

Contact Phone 703-239-3299

Contact State VA

Contact ZIP Code 22030

\*Indicate which deadline you are meeting with this filing.

2025-04-03

## Explanation of Effort and Availability of Commercial Equipment

\*Provide an explanation of efforts undertaken, and challenges encountered, in permanently removing, replacing, and disposing of covered communications equipment or service.

Yes. We recently completed the removal of covered equipment at one additional site. This takes our removal completion to 59 of 70 sites. No. All items removed prior to the January 2025 quarterly report have been properly destroyed. The items at the one site for which replacement work was completed during this reporting period have been removed but not yet destroyed. These items are being warehoused until the removal activities at the remaining sites can be completed for operational and cost efficiencies. Yes. Upon learning that the Federal legislation enacted in December 2024 would provide for the balance of the program funding, we resumed replacement work. At that time, one additional site was replacement-ready. Efforts to mobilize an installation crew started during the first week of January 2025. The replacement-related work resumed later that month and was completed by February 14, 2025.

\*Explain whether you are finding commercially available equipment in the marketplace. If not, then explain efforts taken to obtain replacement equipment.

No. For understandable commercial and economic reasons, the long delay in program funding has caused a significant loss of focus and commitment to timely completion of the work by much of the vendor community. Until such time that the vendor community is able to reallocate the necessary resources to the issue, planning and preparation for the resumption of replacement, removal, and destruction activities is literally all that can be done.

\* If there is additional information relevant to the preceding questions or that you believe the Commission should be aware of, please include the information below.

Pine Belt has completed 100% of the replacement activities at 55 of 67 RAN sites. Two additional sites have been partially replaced. Some insecure equipment remains in service at two other sites that are donor sites for distributed remote radio units that are part of the 10 remaining sites requiring additional work. The 10 remaining sites present several challenges that must be addressed to fully meet the program requirements and fulfill end-user expectations. These challenges include but are not necessarily limited to the following issues:

1. One of the existing sites is an outdated Cell on Wheel (COW) with an antenna height of only 80' +/- . The structure itself cannot be modified to accommodate the replacement equipment nor can its height be extended to achieve like-for-like voice coverage, including emergency 9-1-1 calling, with the CDAM voice provided prior to the conversion to VoLTE. As such, a new structure will be required. The existing structure is located on an industrial site, Pine Belt does not have authorization from the property owner to modify the existing site. This site must be relocated to comply with regulations.

2. At another site, an Osprey (migratory bird) has nested on the Pine Belt antennae and RRU frame, severely restricting our ability to conduct preliminary swap-out analyses. This also makes it impossible to install the necessary replacement equipment until the nesting issue is resolved. Special handling will also be required to remove the insecure items once the replacement equipment is installed. The timing of all the intertwined dependencies at this site have already and will continue on result in delays in completion of all program activities at this site.

3. Based on RF analyses, at least six out of the ten remaining sites are unable to provide comparable VoLTE coverage to CDMA using the current RAD CL configuration. To address this, the RAD CL height must be increased, but this is not feasible with the current tower structures.

4. Structural analyses have revealed that the towers at six of the ten sites have failed and cannot support the required replacement equipment. Significant modifications would be required to strengthen these structures and even after modification, they would still be unable to accommodate the increased RAD CL height as determined by RF analyses.

5. We currently rent tower space at a majority of our RAN sites including 8 of the 10 remaining sites. To reach the current level of completion, we were required to accept significant increases in our monthly tower rent payments, something that has compounded the operational expense (OPEX) challenges caused by the program. It is a given that the tower landlords at the remaining 8 will also require additional rents for the replacement equipment further increasing our already strained OPEX position. Whereas it is understood that OPEX is not necessarily a direct concern of the program, it is something that we as the operator cannot ignore. As such, if we are required to choose between accepting the additional OPEX burdens to complete the replacement activities at each of these sites or simply remove and destroy the insecure equipment and abandon the site, upon full consideration of the economics of each individual site, we will likely decide in favor of the latter at many of these 8. Abandoning these sites would significantly reduce the network.

In summary, even though we have made significant progress toward achieving the ultimate performance goals of the rip and replace program it is clear that a significant amount of work remains. Furthermore, for the reasons discussed above, the best

## Program Compliance

\*Indicate whether recipient has fully complied with (or is in the process of complying with) all requirements of the Reimbursement Program.

☒ Yes ☐ No

\*Indicate whether recipient has permanently removed from its communications network all covered communications equipment or services that were in the recipient's network as of the date of the submission of the recipient's application request for funding.

☐ Yes ☒ No

If recipient has not yet completed the removal process, what estimated percentage of the removal process have you completed?

84

\*Indicate whether recipient has replaced all covered communications equipment or services that were in the recipient's network as of the date of the submission of the recipient's application request for funding.

☐ Yes ☒ No

If recipient has not yet completed the replacement process, what estimated percentage of the replacement process have you completed?

85

\*Indicate whether recipient has disposed of all covered communications equipment or services that were in the recipient's network as of the date of the submission of the recipient's application request for funding.

☐ Yes ☒ No

If recipient has not yet completed the disposal process, what estimated percentage of the disposal process have you completed?

83

\*Indicate whether recipient has fully complied with (or is in the process of complying with) the timeline submitted by the recipient. If not, provide explanation for deviation.

☐ Yes ☒ No

\*The filer has indicated no to a question in this section, please provide additional information.

Timeline deviation. As previously reported, the original timeline no longer represents our expected milestone completion dates. Virtually all sections of the timeline were impacted by the program funding delay. We still have multiple sites running insecure RAN equipment. Until we install the replacement equipment at all RAN sites we cannot remove and dispose of the remaining insecure core items without significant negative impact on coverage and commercial services.

## Certifications

\*By checking the box and providing the electronic signature where indicated below, the Certifying Official on behalf of the filer certifies under penalty of perjury that:

☒ (1) The Certifying Official is authorized to submit this status report on behalf of the above-named filer and, based on information known to me or provided to me by employees responsible for the information being submitted, the information set forth in this status report has been examined and is true, accurate, and complete, and the expenditures, disbursements and cash receipts are for the purposes and objectives set forth in the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Certifying Official acknowledges that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information or statement, or the omission of any material fact on this status report or on any other document submitted by the filer may subject the filer and the undersigned to punishment by fine or forfeiture under the Communications Act (47 U.S.C. §§ 502, 503(b), 1606), or fine or imprisonment under Title 18 of the United States Code (18 U.S.C. § 1001, §§ 286-287, and § 1343), or can lead to liability under the False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733, and §§ 3801-3812). (2) The filer is in compliance with the statute, rules, and orders governing the Reimbursement Program, including but not limited to allocations, draw downs, payments, obligations and expenditures of money, and the Certifying Official acknowledges that failure to be in compliance and remain in compliance with those statutes, rules, and orders may result in the denial of funding, cancellation of funding commitments, and/or recoupment of past disbursements. The Certifying Official acknowledges that the filer will maintain detailed records, including receipts, of all costs eligible for reimbursement actually incurred for a period of 10 years; and will file all required documentation for its expenses. The Certifying Official acknowledges that failure to comply with the statute, rules, and orders governing the Reimbursement Program could result in civil or criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities.

## Certifier Information

Certifier  
Signature      John Nettles

Certifier Phone    334-385-5001

Certifier Name    John Nettles

Certifier Email    john@pinebelt.net

Certifier Title    President

Date Signed      2025-04-01