

Jonathan V. Cohen

Partner

Jonathan V. Cohen helps guide companies in the telecommunications, broadband and media sectors as they evaluate and cultivate business opportunities in a constantly shifting legal, regulatory and political landscape, leveraging his over 30 years of private practice and government experience in policy and transactional matters. He regularly appears on behalf of clients before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other executive branch agencies whose work touches their interests. Mr. Cohen is a recognized expert in spectrum transactions and wireless policy, and particularly in the rules and processes governing spectrum auctions (including incentive auctions). He holds the Martindale Hubbell AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rating, has been selected multiple times as a Washington DC Super Lawyer, and has been singled out for nationwide recognition by his clients for “outstanding service” on corporate and commercial transactions.

Mr. Cohen is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and client seminars, and periodically writes columns for telecom publications. At the request of the U.S. Department of State, he served as a Private Sector Advisor to the U.S. delegation at the 2002 World Telecommunications Development Conference in Istanbul, Turkey. His work has included:

- Assisting both broadcast and wireless industry clients in navigating the intricacies of the FCC’s upcoming incentive auction, which promises to repurpose spectrum from television broadcast to mobile broadband use.
- Representing Atlantic Tele-Network, Inc. in securing approval of its \$200 million acquisition of wireless facilities and customers in 26 markets in six states from Verizon Wireless;
- Representing Centennial Communications Corp. in its \$944 million merger with AT&T Inc.;
- On behalf of Cingular Wireless, devising and implementing structures to accomplish the unwind of an infrastructure-sharing arrangement with T-Mobile USA, a process that took four years to complete and involved dozens of complex agreements;
- Assisting Cingular Wireless in a broad range of transactions, including its merger with AT&T Wireless Services, a \$1.4 billion spectrum acquisition from NextWave Telecom Inc.; and the acquisition of controlling interests in several affiliates that had acquired licenses as “designated entities” under the FCC’s rules; and
- Formulating some of the first spectrum lease agreements executed under a new policy adopted by the FCC in 2003. Many elements of the spectrum leases drafted by Mr. Cohen have become the standard in the industry.

Mr. Cohen joined Wilkinson Barker in July 1998 after five and a half years in senior staff positions at The White House and at the FCC. He served as Assistant Counsel to President Clinton in the Office of Presidential Personnel, where he was responsible for vetting candidates for nomination to sub-Cabinet level positions at the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Commerce. At the FCC, Mr. Cohen advised two FCC Chairmen and worked in the Office of Plans and Policy, Mass Media Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. During his FCC tenure, Mr. Cohen co-authored the rules for FCC spectrum auctions and directed the FCC’s first broadband PCS auction, which at \$7.7 billion earned a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest auction to date. For his work in developing the FCC spectrum auction program, Mr. Cohen received (along with others) the “Hammer Award” for Reinventing Government from Vice President Al Gore’s



CONTACT

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BAR ADMISSIONS

District of Columbia, 1983

EDUCATION

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1982
B.S. (Economics), The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 1978

PRACTICE AREAS

Administrative & Court Litigation
Broadband & IP-Enabled Services
Corporate & Commercial Transactions
Internet of Things
Media Content & Distribution
Privacy, Data Protection & Cybersecurity
Tower Siting & Infrastructure
Wireless Communications

National Performance Review. His leadership of the PCS auction attracted the attention of The American Lawyer magazine, which named Mr. Cohen "Dealmaker of the Month" in May 1995. Mr. Cohen's FCC tenure also included work in formulating competition policy for new and innovative spectrum uses, establishing new digital television and political programming policies, and spearheading the FCC's effort to ensure that wireline telecommunications carriers adequately addressed the Year 2000 computer problem. He also served as counsel to the President's Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters.

Before his government service, Mr. Cohen practiced communications law in Washington, D.C. He represented one of the first "non-wireline" cellular telephone service providers in FCC hearings to obtain licenses and in a wide variety of legal matters pertaining to the construction of its network. His clients also included cable television system operators and broadcasters, whom he assisted in rule making proceedings at the FCC and in corporate and commercial transactions. Before entering law school, he was a news reporter at a major market radio station.

Mr. Cohen is active in local and national politics. He helped formulate policies for President Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign as a member of the campaign's Tech, Media and Telecom Policy Group. In 2002, Mr. Cohen took a leave of absence from the firm to help direct the first Congressional campaign of Chris Van Hollen, who defeated an eight-term incumbent in Maryland's 8th Congressional District. After serving 14 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, Van Hollen was elected to represent Maryland in the U.S. Senate in 2016. Senator Van Hollen sits on four Senate committees – Appropriations; Budget; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; and Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry – and chairs the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee for the 2018 election cycle.

Mr. Cohen is a long-standing and active member of the Federal Communications Bar Association and the Computer and Telecommunications Law Section of the D.C. Bar. He also co-chaired the FCBA's Committee on Global Telecommunications Development for three years.

ACTIVITIES AND RECOGNITION

Washington, DC Super Lawyer (2013 - 2019)

Recommended by Legal 500 US 2017

Recipient, Martindale Hubbell AV® Preeminent Peer Review Rating

One of 86 Attorneys Nationwide Named to the BTI Transactions All-Star Team (2008)

Member, Tech, Media and Telecom Policy Group, 2008 Presidential Campaign of Barack Obama

Private Sector Advisor – U.S. Department of State delegation to the World Telecommunications Development Conference, Istanbul, Turkey (2002)

Recipient of the "Hammer Award" from Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review for Reinventing Government (1995)

Dealmaker of the Month, The American Lawyer magazine (May 1995)

Member, Federal Communications Bar Association (Former Co-Chair, Committee on Global Telecommunications Development)

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