T-Mobile And Sprint Merger Gets Crucial Approval, Resulting In Huge 5G Spectrum Cache

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Lynnette Luna, Principal Technology Analyst at GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, offers her view:

'Almost two years after announcing plans to merge, it appears T-Mobile and Sprint will get the official go-ahead after a federal judge dismissed arguments from states that the deal would hurt wireless competition in the U.S. The California Public Utilities Commission must still approve the transaction.

'Waiting this long to merge eroded the 'New' T-Mobile's ability to come to market with the first high-quality nationwide 5G network, but it still has an envious 5G spectrum position in the US. The operator has already launched a nationwide 5G network in the 600 MHz band and now it will get its hands on highly coveted mid-band spectrum, which is considered the Holy Grail of 5G spectrum because it can offer wider coverage and faster data speeds.

'T-Mobile's rivals all lack that mid-band spectrum, but there is hope that the Federal Communications Commission will auction off more of this vital spectrum by December 2020. Now the race is on for US carriers to deploy a more comprehensive 5G network. All nationwide US carriers have made 5G deployments but only using the spectrum they have available, which has led to limitations in coverage and speed for many carriers.

'The trick now is for T-Mobile to quickly put Sprint's spectrum into use and beat its rivals with a 5G network that is clearly differentiated in terms of coverage and speed. While Sprint has seven 5G markets up and running, it has been in a holding pattern waiting for the merger to go through. If the merger had closed one year ago, T-Mobile would have had an overwhelming head start over its rivals in 5G. T-Mobile will be able to redeploy Sprint's spectrum quickly, but that process will likely take a year or more.'

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