

Chairman Ander Crenshaw
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Hearing - Federal Communications Commission
March 25, 2014
Opening Statement As Prepared

The hearing will come to order.

I would like to welcome our witnesses, Chairman Tom Wheeler and Commissioner Ajit Pai from the Federal Communications Commission. This is the first time you both have testified before this Committee. Welcome and thank you for being here today.

The focus of today's hearing is the FCC's fiscal year 2015 budget request. Your request is for a \$35 million, or 10.5 percent, increase over the current level of funding. While the FCC is funded by fees, these are fees directly passed on to consumers and so I believe Congressional oversight is an important check on the Commission's activities.

Learning that the Commission, prior to your arrival, had planned to spend money on an inappropriate study outside of your agency's jurisdiction on newsroom operations leads me to think perhaps the Commission has more money than it needs. While we understand that you may have some funding needs in order to keep up with the ever changing technology landscape, we expect you to look at your current spending first before coming to us for increases.

As you both know, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 provided the FCC with the authority to conduct spectrum incentive auctions. This is in itself a complicated process and is expected to raise over \$25 billion in revenue, as well as create a nation-wide communications network for first responders. These auctions will be quite a task for the FCC to implement and I look forward to hearing more about the development of these auctions and how they are progressing.

Given today's technological and competitive landscape, my interest in seeing a leaner, more efficient, and more transparent FCC has not diminished. Chairman Wheeler, I hope you can take serious this Committee's request to review your organizational structure to reform and reorganize the FCC to more appropriately reflect the Commission's current role and to keep up with the pace of the technology industries you regulate.

This Committee is committed to fiscal responsibility and we take that charge seriously. We expect all agencies under our jurisdiction to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, including the FCC.

The industries and services that the FCC regulates are critical to American communication and business. These technologies are advancing at an ever quicker pace, and the FCC must keep up, while not deterring or stifling competition or innovation. Overregulation hurts American businesses and markets. The FCC should consider the impact of its regulations and should employ rigorous cost-benefit analysis of rulemakings, where appropriate.

I look forward to discussing these important issues with you both at today's hearing. There is much to discuss.

Thank you both for the work that you and your staffs do. I look forward to your testimony.

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