



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 14, 2015

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2328-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of your Subcommittee on April 30th at the hearing entitled "FCC Reauthorization: Improving Commission Transparency." It was a robust dialogue, and I appreciate hearing directly your Subcommittee members' questions, concerns, and goals. During the hearing, we touched on a wide variety of process reform issues, including changes made at the Commission since I began my chairmanship and future work to be done on our internal process reforms. To that end, I would like to provide important details and commitments on our future internal process reform plans.

As I mentioned at the recent hearings, a key part of this initiative is a new task force that I convened in response to the concerns expressed by Commissioner O'Rielly in his blogs and other statements regarding long-standing internal procedures at the Commission. Our internal processes and protocols must work for every member of the Commission, and so I asked my fellow Commissioners to nominate a representative from each of their offices to participate in the task force. We need everyone at the table.

As we discussed at the hearing, the task force will have a multi-faceted agenda. It will start by reviewing the practices of other similar agencies in the areas of transparency, rulemaking, and delegated authority. The task force will use the data from other agencies' practices to inform its work in developing recommendations for proposed changes in processes relating to these areas here at the FCC. Topics that will be reviewed and considered will include, but are not limited to: (a) the use of delegated authority, and practices for providing notice of matters being handled on delegated authority; (b) procedures for pre-vote circulation of Commission-level matters; (c) procedures associated with editorial privileges after adoption of an item; (d) practices to encourage efficient Commission decision-making, such as the Consent Agenda; (e) approaches for providing increased transparency of FCC procedures and protocols;

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and (f) practices to track, disclose and encourage prompt Commissioner votes on items on circulation.

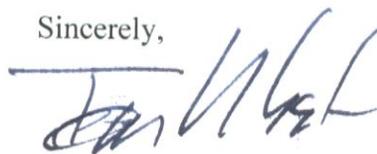
While the task force will be led by senior staff at the Commission, its inquiry and research will solicit input from both internal and external stakeholders. For instance, I expect it will set up a comment mechanism to solicit input from those who do business regularly at the FCC, including consumers, licensees, and practitioners. It may make use of roundtables or focus groups of internal and external stakeholders, as well as hold Congressional staff briefings. It also may propose trials or pilot programs to see how a particular new process proposal would actually work in practice.

The task force has already discussed a path forward, including which agencies to review and what topics to cover in that outreach, and indeed that agency outreach is already underway. I expect the task force will meet regularly over the next few months, and will welcome creative ideas, regardless of whether they have been tried by other agencies. The goal is for the task force to propose a package of reforms for the Commissioners to review in September. As I committed to you during your hearing, I will update you and your colleagues on the recommendations of the task force this fall for review and dialogue.

I want to emphasize that the broader work on implementing the recommendations of the February 2014 Process Reform report will continue in parallel to the work of this new task force. There is much yet to be done in that context, and staff throughout the agency will continue to make progress on that initiative.

Working with my fellow Commissioners, I hope and expect that we can make substantial steps toward improving the FCC so that we better serve American consumers and businesses. I am committed to a task force that is focused on results – through recommendations and action items – rather than one that gets bogged down in endless reports. I believe Congress and the public deserve nothing less. I look forward to sharing with you and your Congressional colleagues the outcome of this process in the early fall, as well as keeping you informed as the work progresses.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce