

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
July 12, 2016**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Chairman Wheeler and members of the commission, thank you for joining us. Over the many times we have convened, my message has been consistent, the FCC has jurisdiction over one of the most important and vibrant sectors of our economy – its decisions are critical to innovation, jobs, and our nations’ leadership in global technology. What you do and how you do it has a tremendous impact on all of us – today, tomorrow and for years to come. It matters here in Washington. It matters back home in Michigan. It matters everywhere.

We asked you to follow the lead of this committee in its pursuit to improve FCC process for the betterment of all stakeholders. Dating back to the 112th Congress, we’ve worked in a bipartisan way to usher H.R. 2583, the FCC Process Reform Act through the House. We urged for the agency to engage in fair, open, and transparent process in the execution of its mission. We stressed that your loyalty to these things provides the certainty that nurtures innovation, investment, and job creation.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding our repeated calls, all indications are that these requests have been ignored and that the FCC is broken – honest and vigorous policy debate, compromise, and collegiality are by all accounts absent on the eighth floor: an observation supported by the ever growing list of 3-2 votes. The agency has sadly become tainted by partisan politics, and seemingly lost its independence.

When we met last, the chairman had recently presented his colleagues with a proposal to impose new requirements on the video subscription market and a new privacy regime for Internet service providers. These proposals have the potential to harm the very sectors they are attempting to preserve and stimulate, and concerns continue to grow from both sides of the aisle.

Folks back in Michigan, American consumers across the country, and job creators are concerned with continued innovation, investment, and job creation that the communications and technology industries have delivered in the past. As you approach these significant matters – and all others in these last months – do so with an eye toward the successful policies that have fostered the video market and Internet that are cornerstones of American society.

While the agency has lost its way, it’s not time to throw in the towel. There remain opportunities to work across the aisle to get things done that really impact American consumers. Resolving concerns about rural call completion, successfully completing the incentive auction, and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse in the Universal Service Fund should be bipartisan issues. Let’s continue working to do better. Putting more of a premium on cooperation than on partisanship. There is much at stake, and we all want a flourishing and functioning, truly independent agency to help guide our economy for years to come.

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