

**Opening Statement of Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Reauthorization of NTIA”
February 2, 2017**

(As prepared for delivery)

As we continue this subcommittee’s work modernizing the laws around communications and technology, and striving to promote innovation and investment, it only makes sense to begin by taking a look at one of the agencies tasked with developing telecommunications policy. The last NTIA reauthorization was adopted in 1992. It is far past time that we again reauthorize the agency, and a first step in the process is to examine the role of the agency, past, present, and future in crafting policies that will achieve our shared goals.

We are pleased to have three witnesses today that can speak to their experiences as heads of NTIA. I’m certain they will provide us with valuable perspective on the work that the agency has done, but also hopefully give us good ideas as to how to empower NTIA going forward.

One of the biggest bipartisan priorities for this subcommittee over the years has been satisfying the demand for additional spectrum for commercial use. As the FCC winds down the broadcast incentive auction, one of the last opportunities for reallocation of commercial spectrum to other commercial users, we are again

turning our focus to federally held spectrum. The government holds a large amount of spectrum, and we recognize that they require much of it for carrying out critical government missions. However, we also want to be certain that the government is armed with the best technology, and is using spectrum as efficiently as possible. The dividend from this investment in our government agencies will be more spectrum to meet broadband needs. Broadband deployment is America's greatest infrastructure challenge and we must rise to the occasion. We have long said that spectrum will need to be an "all of the above" solution, and NTIA will be an essential player in any discussion moving forward.

In addition to spectrum policy, NTIA plays a leading role in public safety and cyber security policy. NTIA serves as a liaison for interagency cooperation and standard setting in both of these areas, promoting safer and more secure communications networks. We have seen time and again in recent months how serious cyber threats are, and we will need to use all tools at our disposal to combat these attacks—especially when it comes to critical infrastructure. NTIA has the capability to bring together a diverse group of government stakeholders to address the problem and develop best practices. We must ensure that we empower NTIA to be as effective and efficient as possible in combatting cyber attacks and promoting strong public safety networks.

The communications sector is vibrant and thriving, and the government agencies that handle these issues should reflect that. Today, we will look at how to enable NTIA to craft thoughtful telecommunications policy that promotes continued innovation and investment. I thank our witnesses for their thoughtful testimony and look forward to a robust discussion on this important agency.

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