

Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Reauthorization of the National Telecommunications and
Information Administration”
February 2, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

I had the honor of chairing this subcommittee for six years and still care deeply about the issues under its jurisdiction. There is never a dull moment in this exciting industry. The communications and technology sector is a bright spot in the American economy as it continues to innovate, compete, and grow despite the recession of 2008. I have always argued that this industry deserves a fair, transparent government agency to oversee the rules of competition. Moreover, this industry deserves a government that understands modern technology and recognizes that these innovations are a critical underpinning of the domestic economy. Our hope today is to ensure that the agencies overseeing this dynamic industry have the tools they need to set an environment that fosters innovation and competition.

I applaud Chairman Blackburn for kicking off this Congress with a close examination of NTIA. This agency plays a critical role in determining how spectrum is allocated. We will be looking increasingly to our government agencies to determine where spectrum can be re-purposed for ever increasing commercial needs without compromising the safety of our infrastructure.

This agency also plays an important role in assessing policy challenges in securing our networks. We should consider how its role should evolve in this day and age, when threats include everyone from nation states to teenage kids. I am also

mindful that additional work must be done on public safety networks in general. NTIA's responsibilities include not only the incubation of FirstNet but also the distribution of grants intended to incentivize states to deploy and support public safety answering points that can receive IP-based texts, voice, and video. This work hasn't exactly gotten off to a roaring start, and it is high time we looked into moving that forward.

I appreciate the work that this subcommittee has done to date on these issues, and I know that under Chairman Blackburn's leadership, you will continue to do good work. I thank the witnesses for their time today and look forward to their testimony.

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