

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Oversight and Reauthorization of the Federal
Communications Commission”**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning everyone.

American innovation in the internet space has literally revolutionized the world and everything we do and how we do it. From research and communications to shopping and entertainment, the internet is an essential part of our everyday lives. Given the debate over the rules for internet operations and consumer privacy, it is our responsibility on the Energy and Commerce Committee to fully understand all sides of internet governance. Therefore, I am announcing this morning that I am convening a full Energy and Commerce Committee hearing entitled “Ground Rules for the Internet Ecosystem” on Thursday, September 7, 2017. Today I am sending formal invitations to the top executives of leading tech companies, including Facebook, Alphabet, Amazon, and Netflix, as well as broadband providers including Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, and Charter Communications inviting them to testify. It’s time for Congress to legislate the rules of the internet, and stop the ping-pong game of regulations and litigation. And make no mistake, given the importance of this public policy debate and the work we need to do as a committee, it is essential that we hear directly from the

country's top internet and edge provider leaders who frequently speak out publicly about the rules of the internet. It's time they came before us and directly shared their positions and answered our questions. With more than a month's advance notice, I'm sure they can arrange their schedules to accommodate our invitation.

Now, with regard to today's panel: Chairman Pai – welcome and congratulations again on taking over the helm of the Federal Communications Commission. Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner O'Rielly welcome. Thank you all for joining us.

We have begun a new chapter in the history of the FCC; one that will shape some of the most important parts of our national economy – the telecommunications industry, the video distribution industries, and the internet.

In today's hearing, we begin to examine reauthorizing the FCC for the first time since 1990. By any estimation, this discussion is long overdue and today we continue conversations to make the FCC a model agency with proposals for a number of process reforms. When we first took up these open government reforms, I said it wasn't about who headed the FCC at the time, it was about improving transparency and public involvement in a public process. I believed that when Chairman Wheeler ran the FCC just as much as I believe it now with Chairman Pai at the helm.

I was pleased to see that Chairman Pai demonstrated his commitment to making the FCC's operations more transparent through action by initiating a pilot program to publicly release the text of Commission agenda items at the same time they are presented to other Commissioners for vote -- a measure his predecessor opposed.

There are a number of matters pending at the Commission, many of which we will talk about today. With the forward portion of the incentive auction concluded, the next phase -- the broadcaster repack -- is underway. The Commission has set forth an aggressive schedule to move all of the broadcasters impacted by the auction. While I have every confidence that Chairman Pai will work to ensure consumers continue to have access to over-the-air television, concerns remain about the sufficiency of the 39-month timeline and the \$1.75 billion budget. I take these concerns seriously and will continue to work closely with the Commission to make sure that over the air broadcasting and the viewers they reach on their main channel and on their translators are not adversely affected.

And of course, Chairman Pai has commenced a proceeding to examine returning the regulation of the internet to the bipartisan framework that made it the economic engine that it is. As we wait for this process to take its course, the future of the greatest economic engine of modern times is clouded by uncertainty, with a growing recognition that the time is now for legislative action. We offered a way

forward on net neutrality in 2015. I believe now, as I did then, that we should work together to write bipartisan legislation to protect the internet from bad actors who want to use their unfair advantage to block, throttle or in other ways engage in bad behavior. The American people deserve no less.

Chairman Pai, Commissioner Clyburn, and Commissioner O’Rielly thank you all again.