Opening Statement of Republican Leader Bob Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
"Accountability and Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission"
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As Prepared for Delivery

Good morning. I am happy to welcome the Commission here today to discuss its progress on a variety of issues, including infrastructure, spectrum, rural broadband, and robocalls.

I think it's safe to say that there is more agreement on the issues I just mentioned than disagreement. We can all agree on the importance of bringing the benefits of broadband to all Americans, especially rural Americans. But, despite the work from this committee and the FCC, we still have members on both sides of the aisle whose constituents lack broadband.

Earlier this year, I was fortunate to have two FCC Commissioners join me in my district to see first-hand the connectivity my constituents enjoy and the additional connectivity they so desperately need. Commissioner Carr joined me for a visit at a hospital in Toledo, Ohio where we saw how health care professionals are embracing telemedicine for stroke patients. We also visited a local WISP who showed us how they provide broadband to the Wood County Sherriff's call dispatch center and a local

farmer – where, of course, the Commissioner couldn't resist the opportunity to see an antenna up close and personal on the top of a grain elevator! My feet stayed on the ground. My trip with Commissioner Carr continued with a stop at WBGU in Bowling Green and ended on a farm in Napoleon, Ohio where we saw how they're utilizing precision agriculture technologies to help make their farm more efficient. Two days later, Commissioner O'Rielly joined me in Defiance, Ohio where we met with internet service providers across my district to discuss broadband access and availability in Northwest and West Central Ohio.

Being able to go out into the community and experience broadband connectivity, or lack thereof, is an incredibly useful tool to know where we need to target precious federal funding to support additional broadband growth.

To help further inform the FCC's ability to tell where broadband is, and more importantly, where it still isn't, I introduced a bill last week with my good friend from Vermont, Mr. Welch, that would require the FCC to establish a challenge process to verify fixed and mobile broadband service coverage data. Local officials in my district have conducted their own broadband studies to evaluate their residents' broadband needs and prove that there are holes in the FCC maps. After hearing about

these local actions, I started working on the "Broadband Mapping After Public Scrutiny Act" or "Broadband MAPS Act" to enhance the data the FCC already collects by involving additional entities, such as local and state governments, to verify FCC data. I look forward to hearing more about the Commission's mapping efforts and ways the agency is working to get a better picture of broadband connectivity in this country so that we can target the truly unserved areas.

I also look forward to hearing about the FCC's plans to continue making more spectrum available for 5G. As I have learned, 5G requires a variety of spectrum inputs – low-band, mid-band, and high-band, as well as unlicensed. This is because each part of the band has different characteristics, and all types are needed to build a robust 5G network capable of serving this country – including rural America. The FCC cleared a huge swath of mid-band spectrum in the incentive auction and carriers are now deploying innovative broadband offerings on that spectrum. The Commission has also successfully auctioned off spectrum in the high-band and is actively working to make more spectrum available in the low-band and unlicensed spaces.

Another issue with broad bipartisan support is the need to stop the scourge of illegal robocalls. They're not wanted. They're tricking

people into scams. And it's costing Americans billions of dollars. It's one of the biggest issues I hear about from families in Ohio. At our hearing on this topic last month, it became clear that my district is not unique in these concerns. We must -- and we will -- do everything in our power to stop the annoying and illegal robocalls, while protecting the technology for the life-saving, pro-consumer services people need.

I am encouraged by the work of industry to protect consumers from unwanted robocalls by developing a set of procedures to authenticate caller ID information associated with telephone calls to combat unlawful caller ID spoofing. I also appreciate the FCC's work in holding industry accountable for delivering that system to the public as early as the end of this year. I am optimistic that this will curb some of the illegal, unwanted robocalls. But, as technology continues to evolve, so do to the tactics that bad actors use to illegally spoof numbers and make fraudulent calls.

For this reason, I introduced the Support Tools to Obliterate Pesky Robocalls Act or STOP Robocalls Act. My bill would give the FCC additional tools in its robocall toolbox to go after bad actors. Specifically, the STOP Robocalls Act would help the FCC identity these scammers and empower consumers with robocall blocking technology.

I look forward to hearing our witnesses' views on how we can all work together to further our existing efforts on infrastructure, spectrum, rural broadband, and robocalls. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.