

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
"Repurposing the C-Band to Benefit all Americans"  
October 29, 2019**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome our witnesses to this hearing.

Before diving into the debate over how to best clear a portion of the C-Band for 5G deployment, I want to emphasize the goals I believe every Member here shares:

- First, the process must lead to auction revenues and spectrum allocations benefitting Americans in all parts of our country.
- Second, we must preserve spectrum for those that are reliant on the current C-Band services now and into the future.
- Third, we must take interference concerns into account when redeploying the spectrum.
- Fourth, we should seek to make this critical mid-band spectrum quickly available for 5G.

- Fifth, this process should not overlook the opportunity to also facilitate resources for connecting rural communities with broadband, and upgrading our emergency call centers to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) – all *without any deficit spending*.
- Lastly, the process must be fair, open, and transparent.

With that in mind, I know there are differences of opinion from various stakeholders on how the FCC may proceed, and I would expect the Commission is taking a hard look at weighing the ramifications of each option. To further facilitate that public conversation, and to ensure our discussion moves to the next level without ceding the point on an auction mechanism, I'm pleased to see a legislative proposal for today's hearing.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said since the very first hearing you chaired, we remain committed to working with you on finding consensus solutions. This subcommittee can be a haven for bipartisan solutions, where we don't let the politics of the day determine outcomes for sound policy. I have first-hand experience from sitting where you are that spectrum policy has been an area for such bipartisanship. I believe House passage of robocall legislation, and us moving soon on broadband mapping and supply chain-related measures are further testament to that.

With court decisions begging us to solve one particular issue that has thus far vexed this subcommittee, my hope remains that this we can demonstrate our ability to reach sound, bipartisan solutions again and solve this issue for good.

With that said, we all agree that we must make this critical mid-band spectrum available – and do so *quickly*. If we are questioning how the Commission may act, we have an obligation to clear that that up, rather than direct fire at Chairman Pai, so the FCC has clear direction from us on how to accomplish our shared goals. If there is a concern over the timeframe it would take to complete a public auction due to outdated software that can't run multiple or complex auctions, we should take up reauthorizations for the FCC and NTIA so they have state-of-the-art tools for their respective spectrum management roles going forward.

Let me raise another point that bears review. In our recent legislative hearing on the supply chain bills, we heard from our witnesses about the stark competitive implications for trusted equipment vendors, and the pressures they face to lower prices, especially to appeal to rural providers in hard to reach areas like my district in Oregon. While those bills are important for addressing our current network vulnerabilities and understanding future risk, we can do significantly

more through market incentives to give rural providers options that may be more cost-competitive. That can only happen when trusted vendors have a market for mid-band equipment, and we know that freeing up C-Band holds the key in that regard. If we don't, there could be potentially serious, long-term implications for the trusted vendors we rely on now.

To put an even finer point on it, our failure will worsen the digital divide for rural constituents who can benefit the most from the propagation aspects of the mid-band spectrum that would come online.

We are all Americans, and I know we can work together to beat the command-and-control markets dictated by some countries to protect and expand their home-grown vendor base for world dominance. So, on this and other priorities I outlined, we would be remiss to let this opportunity pass us by. I'm pleased to see Chairman Pai's commitment to deliver this mid-band spectrum to market fairly, transparently, and expeditiously, and look forward to a thoughtful discussion today on how to achieve our common goals.

Thank you.