

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on
"Leading the Wireless Future: Securing American Network Technology."
April 21, 2021

Mr. Tim Donovan, SVP, Legislative Affairs, Competitive Carriers Association

The Honorable Kathleen Rice (D-NY)

1. Should Federal agencies be using all of their available authority to exclude from U.S. networks untrusted network equipment produced by state-supported companies, including optical transmission equipment manufacturers that are owned or supported by adversarial governments, if they are deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to U.S. national security?

RESPONSE:

The Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") is required to publish and update a list of covered communications equipment or services posing national security risks, based on determinations by any executive branch interagency body with appropriate national security expertise, the Department of Commerce pursuant to the Executive Order relating to securing the information and communications technology and services supply chain, definitions found in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, or an appropriate national security agency. All Federal agencies should use this process to ensure that untrusted network equipment deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to U.S. national security is excluded from U.S. networks.

- a. If the Department of Commerce were to make that determination, how will that help harden U.S. networks on an end-to-end basis?

RESPONSE:

A determination by the Department of Commerce would require the FCC to add the covered equipment to its list, which would exclude the equipment determined to pose an unacceptable risk from U.S. networks.

The Honorable Robert E. Latta (R-OH)

1. In addition to supporting the replacement of problematic equipment, the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Act called on NTIA to set up a program to guide small and rural providers when it comes to supply chain security risks and in turn make better

investments in equipment and services. Since being established last summer, has this program been helpful and accessible to your members? What more can be done to make sure the program is responsive to the needs of smaller providers?

RESPONSE:

CCA members appreciate the opportunity to engage on the issue of secure telecommunications networks with the NTIA's Communications Supply Chain Risk Information Partnership (C-SCRIP) Program. The C-SCRIP program has created a useful repository of information and resources, and has held several events, including a recent workshop on "Securing the 5G Supply Chain." CCA has encouraged our members to utilize the C-SCRIP program to remain informed regarding the federal government's activities on securing the telecommunications supply chain and other relevant information. With the increase of live industry events in the months ahead, it would be helpful to have NTIA participation to meet with small and rural communications providers and expand access to the C-SCRIP program and resources.

The Honorable Bill Johnson (R-OH)

1. Mr. Donovan, for the FCC's 'rip and replace' program, which addresses a critical national security need, do you foresee any danger that the global semiconductor shortage, or other factors, could increase the cost and timeline of the program?

RESPONSE:

CCA members participating in Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program are closely monitoring the dynamics of the telecommunications supply chain. If the global semiconductor shortage, or other factors, are likely to increase the cost and timeline of the replacement and removal process, the FCC should use the authority provided by Congress to grant a general extension based on a finding "that the supply of replacement communications equipment or services needed by the recipients to achieve the purposes of the Program is inadequate to meet the needs of recipients." The Widelity Report, contracted by the FCC, notes that "Semiconductor manufacturers are increasing capacity this year. However, if the shortages are not resolved by the time the replacement program is underway there may be delays as suppliers increase their delivery times."