

# **Leading the Wireless Future: Securing American Network Technology**

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Chairman Doyle, Ranking Member Latta, members of the Committee, on behalf of the 60 members of the Open RAN Policy Coalition I would like to thank you for holding this important and timely hearing today.

My name is Diane Rinaldo and I have the pleasure of serving as the Executive Director of the Open RAN Policy Coalition, a coalition that not only spans the globe but also the mobile ecosystem.

We are a diverse group of information and communications technology companies that have a common goal of breaking down technological and market barriers to promote a varied and competitive wireless market and create a future in which radio access network (RAN) architecture is based on a more modular design with open and interoperable interfaces.

Our Coalition members include carriers, vendors, cybersecurity providers, tower operators, cloud providers, innovators, start-ups and legacy tech companies that have come together because they understand the health of the entire ecosystem is reliant on a secure, robust and diverse supply chain. We have been working together for nearly a year to educate policymakers across the globe on the benefits of Open RAN.

Today I look forward to discussing the reasons why we believe that Open RAN will provide significant public interest benefits, namely:

- Driving increased competition, innovation and network vendor diversity;
- Providing technological improvements that benefit network management and innovation;
- Making services and products more affordable for consumers, including those in rural and underserved communities; and
- Serving as a complement to parallel advances in enhancing network security and network management for 5G.

The world is on the precipice of the fourth industrial revolution that will be driven by wireless advancements. Whereas the first revolution mechanized production through steam power, the second through electric power, and the third automated production through information technology, the fourth will require a fusion of technological breakthroughs, all catalyzed by next-generation wireless

networks. Effectively leveraging artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles, and advanced robotics to streamline operations depends on the greater bandwidth and lower latency inherent to 5G.

While these new technologies require a faster and more resilient network to flourish, the continued advancement of telecommunications networks is also predicated on certainty and stability within the supply chain. This certainty is currently in question.

The small pool of existing vendors for wireless network buildouts has fueled concerns over supply chain resiliency and competition. Network operators are left with limited choices for next generation networks, posing economic risks and creating barriers for smaller firms in the 5G space.

Traditionally the wireless industry has seen little venture capital over the years because barriers to entry have been so high. A shift in mobile network architecture towards open and interoperable interfaces has already prompted a proliferation of new entrants and start-ups driving innovations not only in the RAN, but also in additional technologies that can be layered in after deployment.

We are seeing first hand that disaggregating the radio access network lowers the barrier to entry for new vendors in the marketplace. Increased vendor choice in turn drives competition and innovation, which leads to lower prices. A more modular network also has the benefit of allowing operators to more easily scale network solutions to match challenges.

Fortunately, the United States, its partners, and the communications companies that serve those markets have reached an inflection point in the development and deployment of Open RAN. In short, this technology is not only ready for prime time, but is actively being deployed in the commercial communications ecosystem, thereby advancing the national interests of the United States and partners.

I want to applaud the hard work done by this Committee and staff with the introduction and passage of the USA Telecommunications Act last year. The funding provided by that legislation will help bolster advanced wireless networks

and future-proof our telecommunications systems. I would also like to add that NTIA is the right agency to be administering the new grant program.

Additionally, I would like to commend the recent bilateral engagements of President Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Suga. The realization of Open RAN being a common advancement for our two nations is further proof that collaborative approaches in technology is good policy.

At the Coalition we are pleased to work alongside several of Japan's most innovative companies including Rakuten Mobile, the organization of one of my fellow panelists here today. I'd also like to highlight founding Coalition members NTT Docomo, which has an active leadership role in the O-RAN Alliance and since 2016 has been using multi-vendor equipment as part of its core network; Fujitsu, which recently partnered with Dish Network to build out a nationwide network using Open RAN solutions; and NEC, which is working with global partners to advance disaggregated network solutions.

Promoting diversity and security in the 5G supply chain is of global interest and will require a common solution. The challenge for policymakers today revolves around a central question: How can we use competition and innovation to drive the next generations of networks?

In order to promote this technological evolution and accelerate a stable, sustainable, and successful transition to 5G and beyond, government initiatives and policy priorities must:

- Support new and existing technology suppliers, as well as small and large network operators, offering open and interoperable RAN solutions as well as integration of those open components;
- Create a competitive global ecosystem of diverse trusted suppliers and service providers; and
- Encourage building, maintaining and investing in U.S. and technological allies' leadership for the development of both 5G and future wireless networks.

The United States is at a critical juncture; the issues that we are discussing today, and which reside under your jurisdiction, no longer pertain only to telecom policy,

but also to economic policy and economic security. As we move to the digitization of everything, mobile networks are the lifeblood of our ecosystem. Ensuring a healthy supply chain has never been more important and working with our allies to sync on these issues has never been more critical.

Thank you for your work on, and attention to, this important issue. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss policies that will help create a more diverse, competitive and secure ecosystem for 5G and beyond.