

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Representative Anna G. Eshoo**

Hearing on “Connecting America: Oversight of NTIA”

February 16, 2022

Chairman Doyle, thank you for holding a hearing on this highly important topic.

This Congress, and in particular this Subcommittee, worked hard on investing an historic \$65 billion in broadband programs to close the digital divide as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law. I’m pleased to welcome Administrator Alan Davidson, who I’ve had the pleasure of working with in the past and believe he is particularly well-suited to oversee the implementation of this historic investment.

NTIA’s role in the implementation of this investment cannot be understated. We have a real opportunity to make tremendous progress toward actually closing the digital divide and empowering *all* Americans to participate in modern society fully. To optimize this opportunity, I recently wrote to the NTIA about policies it ought to consider as part of its implementation of the four main broadband programs it’s tasked with administering, including the following:

- Ensuring funding isn’t spent on Huawei, ZTE, or other companies that pose a national security risk by prohibiting subgrantees from all programs from using funds to purchase equipment from entities on the Federal Communications Commission’s Covered List;
- Enabling community broadband by preempting protectionist state laws to allow municipalities, cooperatives, and public-private partnerships to receive subgrants;
- Advancing pro-competition rules similar to the Department of Agriculture’s recent Rural eConnectivity (ReConnect) Program rules giving partial award preference to states that commit to net neutrality and wholesale open-access networks;
- Requiring a “dig once” policy to reduce deployment costs; and
- Using demand-side incentives to address the shortage in mature semiconductors.

I’d also like to highlight the opportunity NTIA has now to re-establish its leadership role in coordinating the federal government’s use of spectrum. NTIA has a role in resolving the type of confusion that we saw unfold with 5G and the Federal Aviation Administration, and I hope that NTIA takes it.

I look forward to a productive hearing and I yield back.