

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Bob Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Strengthening our Communications Networks: Legislation to Connect and
Protect.”**

May 24, 2022

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning, and welcome to today’s legislative hearing. Thank you to our witnesses who are here with us today.

As our nation’s spectrum resources become more scarce, good public policy plays an increasingly important role in ensuring efficient use. I am happy that today, this subcommittee is considering legislation that will allow the United States to better utilize these valuable airwaves for economic growth and innovation.

Recently, Chairman Doyle and I introduced the Spectrum Innovation Act to accelerate commercial access to the lower 3 gigahertz band. Access to this mid-band spectrum is needed to bring 5G to farms and households across rural America, and I am proud to have worked with my colleague to come to an agreement on this legislation, which I hope moves through Congress and is sent to the President’s desk.

I am also pleased that we are considering the Extending America’s Spectrum Auction Leadership Act of 2022. This legislation extends the FCC’s authority to conduct spectrum auctions and issue licenses for 18 months, which will allow the FCC to continue its ongoing work to make more spectrum available for commercial use. Without Congressional action, the FCC’s authority will expire on September 30 of this year, and I urge swift passage of this bipartisan legislation to avoid any disruption to the FCC’s planned auction activities, like auctioning the 2.5 gigahertz band.

While these are great steps forward, our work is far from over. The FCC, NTIA, and industry must continue to identify opportunities to use spectrum more

efficiently, which remains difficult as the demand for wireless technology grows and spectrum resources become more congested.

Fortunately, we have engineers at NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences, or ITS, who play a critical role in advancing technologies that help NTIA better manage Federal spectrum resources.

ITS played a key role in developing solutions to spectrum sharing between federal and commercial users in the Citizens Broadband Radio Service band. Spectrum that had previously been underutilized by the federal government is now able to be used commercially to promote 5G while protecting federal incumbents. ITS's role will only continue to grow in importance as spectrum repurposing decisions become more difficult, which is why Mr. Carter's legislation, H.R. 4990, the ITS Codification Act, is so important. This legislation takes an important step forward by strengthening ITS authorities and recognizing the contributions the lab makes to our wireless economy.

In order to identify areas where federal spectrum use can be more efficient, Congress must provide NTIA with necessary tools to advance its spectrum management mission. To further this effort, Mr. Guthrie's SMART Act requires NTIA to establish an Incumbent Informing Capability to take a holistic view of how Federal users are using their spectrum resources across the government to identify opportunities for new commercial uses while preserving Federal missions to keep our country safe. As these spectrum management decisions become more difficult, we must utilize every tool in the toolbox to efficiently use these airwaves and provide certainty for commercial investment in wireless deployments.

I am pleased to see the legislation on today's hearing and look forward to discussing these important topics. Thank you, and I yield back.