

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Strengthening our Communications Networks: Legislation to Connect and
Protect”**

May 24, 2022

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The success of our nation’s wireless future depends on smart management of our spectrum resources. Earlier this year we had a hearing on spectrum issues, where we heard overwhelming support from witnesses to extend the Federal Communications Commission’s spectrum auction authority to ensure the successful completion of the FCC’s upcoming spectrum auction of the 2.5 gigahertz band. This will allow carriers to expand 5G across the United States. I am pleased to announce that this Committee responded.

Today we are considering bipartisan legislation to extend the FCC’s auction authority for 18 months, through March 2024. This bill will ensure the agency completes their ongoing spectrum activities, and it provides certainty to bidders in the upcoming 2.5 gigahertz auction that the FCC will be able to issue their licenses if they bid.

I want to thank Chairman Pallone and Chairman Doyle for working with us to reach this bipartisan agreement, and I look forward to advancing this legislation.

As demand for wireless technology grows, we need to adapt to make sure our spectrum resources are used efficiently. While it is critical to repurpose spectrum from federal to commercial use, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find prime spectrum bands that are unencumbered.

I am pleased that we are considering my colleague Representative Guthrie’s SMART Act today, which requires NTIA to establish an Incumbent Informing Capability. This will allow NTIA to see spectrum usage by agency across the federal government and help them improve spectrum use efficiency while also protecting national security.

Representative Carter’s bill, the ITS Codification Act, will codify the important duties of NTIA’s Institute for Telecommunication Sciences, the

government's premier radiofrequency laboratory, clarify the agency's responsibilities, and direct them to advance spectrum repurposing opportunities and certify new technologies as we continue to advance American wireless leadership.

U.S. leadership in next generation technology depends on our ability to develop innovative solutions to repurpose spectrum for commercial use. This will ensure spectrum resources are available for future uses not yet known, and maintain the United States reputation as THE number one place for businesses to invest in innovation and grow the economy.

This committee is leading on solutions to make our spectrum resources available, but to unleash the full potential of today's spectrum legislation, we also need to address barriers to deploying wireless infrastructure.

Energy and Commerce Republicans are leading on a package of bills, the Boosting Broadband Connectivity Agenda, which roll back duplicative, burdensome regulations and permitting requirements to speed up deployment of broadband infrastructure.

Without permitting reform, it will be more difficult for the United States to compete and beat China. If we fail to address these reforms, this committee will miss an opportunity to strengthen American leadership in next-gen communications technology.

We are also considering legislation that would allow survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking to separate from any shared mobile contracts with their abuser.

Republicans have several changes we would like to see made to this bill if it advances, but we stand ready to work with our colleagues to find a solution. Survivors of domestic violence should have the freedom to start fresh, to feel safe and secure, and should be able to separate from their abuser quickly.

This hearing is a great first step to discuss these bills and hear from the witnesses about how they will impact the marketplace.

I look forward to hearing from you all and yield back.