

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology Ranking Member Doris Matsui
Communications and Technology Subcommittee Hearing on “Launching Into the State of the Satellite Marketplace.”

February 2, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Latta.

This is an exciting day for this Subcommittee and for me. Sitting here at the dais, I’m reminded of what an honor and privilege it is to serve as Ranking Member.

It is no exaggeration to say that our Subcommittee has more bearing on the United States’ technological leadership in the 21st Century than any other. From expanding affordable broadband access to developing the next generation of communications networks, we have a unique opportunity to promote innovation and equity in technology.

I’m excited to get to work continuing this Subcommittee’s strong tradition of bipartisanship. Today’s hearing on the Satellite Marketplace is a perfect example of that cooperation in action. This hearing is both important and timely.

You don’t have to take my word for it. As Chairwoman Rosenworcel has said, “the number of applications for satellites before the FCC has never been higher.”

For the United States to remain the pacesetter in satellite communication, we need to modernize satellite governance to keep up with innovation.

Thankfully, both Congress and the FCC are focused on modernizing satellite regulations to ensure they are prepared for the next generation of innovation.

Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone’s SAT Streamlining Act would introduce important updates to the FCC’s satellite rules.

For too long, the licensing process at the FCC has fallen short of what the market needs and this bill would help.

Ranking Member Pallone and Chairwoman Rodgers also teamed up on the Secure Space Act. As an original cosponsor of the rip and replace bill, I’m glad to see additional bipartisan engagement on a vital national security issue.

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In the same way our rip and replace bill would remove vulnerable network gear from companies like Huawei and ZTE, the Secure Space Act would extend those protections to the satellite ecosystem.

And, since we're on the topic, I'd like to take a moment at this hearing to remind everyone that we still have urgent work to do on the rip and replace effort. The funding shortfall is real, it's urgent, and I'm ready to get the job done!

But, back to today's hearing, it's important to note just how much progress has been made by the FCC over the past few months on satellite issues.

Last year, Chairwoman Rosenworcel announced a plan to form the Space Bureau to better support the needs of the growing satellite industry.

The Chairwoman is also turning a critical eye toward the FCC's processes to keep them modern and effective. She recently initiated a rulemaking to request feedback on ways to reduce the timelines for satellite and earth station applications.

I'm glad to see the FCC tackling these issues head-on and believe we have a meaningful opportunity to make progress.

That's why I sent a letter with my Spectrum Caucus Co-Chair Congressman Guthrie urging the FCC to take steps that will support innovation and consumer choice.

In our letter, we urged the FCC to develop additional coordination requirements for satellite operators. Good faith coordination should include meaningful and continuous requirements to ensure the appropriate flow of technical information.

And, as more satellites share operations on limited spectrum, finding ways to encourage spectral efficiency will be important. Across all forms of wireless communication, we need to do more with less and satellites are no different.

Finally, we urged the FCC to strike an appropriate balance between protecting the investments of incumbent operators while allowing new entrants to innovate and compete.

I look forward to staying engaged with the FCC as it moves forward with this rulemaking and am confident it will reinforce American leadership.

With that, I want to thank Chairman Latta for organizing this hearing, our witnesses for appearing before us today, and I look forward to our discussion.

I yield back the remainder of my time.