

Response by Brad Gillen (CTIA) to Question for the Record from the Honorable Anna G. Eshoo

QUESTION:

Each witness at the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing entitled, “Defending American’s Wireless Leadership” on March 10, 2023, testified to the increasing demand for spectrum and the balance that must be made between federal and commercial uses. The Departments of Commerce and Defense have agreed to a process that allows for an ongoing and thorough study examining the potential impact of opening 3 GHz spectrum to commercial use on existing Federal missions.

For the record, please indicate whether you support the position of the Department of Commerce and Department of Defense regarding spectrum auction authority and spectrum availability as described in the enclosed letter dated March 5, 2023.

RESPONSE:

Thank you, Rep. Eshoo. The wireless industry was pleased to see the joint Department of Commerce (DoC) and Department of Defense (DoD) letter highlighting the U.S. is and has long been the global leader in wireless. We appreciate DoC and DoD’s focus on lower 3 GHz, which is a cornerstone of 5G globally. Commercial wireless access to spectrum in the 3.1-3.45 GHz band is critical for U.S. economic and national security interests.

As the DoC and the DoD continue work on the study referenced in your question, known as the “Partnering to Advance Trusted and Holistic Spectrum Solutions” study, we urge you and the Committee on Energy & Commerce to ensure the report fully reflects Congress’s intent to examine all of the spectrum sharing tools available to DoD, including those successfully leveraged in the successful AWS-3 and 3.45 GHz auctions. That study should also account for how coordination efforts used in allied countries throughout the world could be used domestically to support our national security and robust 5G wireless services. It is also critical that the report accounts for future DoD system plans and how new government systems could significantly enhance future commercial opportunities.

We also commend the fact that the joint letter reinforces the importance of the DoC – and specifically NTIA – having a central role in U.S. spectrum management decisions in partnership with the FCC. NTIA is best suited to adjudicate spectrum matters amongst federal agencies and we must allow NTIA to speak on the Executive Branch’s behalf and with a single unified voice.

This study, the Subcommittee’s hearing, and your question all underscore the critical need for Congress to restore the FCC’s auction authority and identify future bands to refill the spectrum pipeline as soon as possible with 5G ready full-power spectrum. CTIA is committed to working with all interested stakeholders and Congress to ensure that mission critical government

operations are preserved while also unlocking future commercial access that is key to our economic security, national security, and global competitiveness.