

**Opening Statement of Chairman Robert E. Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**

“Defending America’s Wireless Leadership”

March 10, 2023

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning, and welcome to today’s hearing on Defending America’s Wireless Leadership.

What we are talking about today impacts Americans in every part of our country, and properly managing our nation’s spectrum resources is an important responsibility. These public resources fuel our economy, enable communications services, and power important federal missions. As technology develops, it is important that spectrum policy keeps pace and efficiently maximizes the use of these finite resources by unleashing innovation and protecting our national security.

Over the past year, this committee worked to improve U.S. spectrum policy.

Last Congress, I co-led the Spectrum Innovation Act to accelerate commercial access to the lower 3 gigahertz band and extend the FCC's spectrum auction authority. This range of frequencies is prime midband spectrum that will improve mobile broadband speeds. The legislation included a measure championed by Mr. Guthrie (KY-2) that would modernize our federal spectrum management process by establishing an incumbent informing capability at NTIA to enhance commercial access to federal frequencies.

Last week, the House passed Chair Rodgers' legislation to extend the FCC's auction authority to May 19.

Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass both the Spectrum Innovation Act and Chair Rodgers' extension measure.

We must now work quickly to agree on a long-term extension of spectrum auction authority that preserves Congressional oversight of spectrum policy and directs auction proceeds to reduce the deficit and fund important initiatives. I look forward to continue working on this important issue.

It's also important to note that good spectrum policy is good for our economy. Our leadership in 4G added billions to our GDP, created tens of thousands of new jobs, and led to the development of the app economy. Leading the world in future generations of wireless services ensures greater investment in next generation technologies. This means we will have more job and development opportunities right here in the United States.

But the economic benefits do not end there. Auctioning spectrum resources also yields significant monetary benefits. Recent FCC auctions have netted over \$100 billion dollars for the U.S.

Treasury—money that can be used to reduce our nation's deficit and fund important priorities.

In addition to making more licensed spectrum available, we must also look for opportunities to make unlicensed spectrum available. The majority of American Internet usage happens indoors, and the use of unlicensed spectrum, such as Wi-Fi, plays a crucial role in providing connectivity for homes and businesses. One report estimates that unlicensed spectrum generates over \$95 billion dollars per year in the connected technology market.

Good spectrum policy is not only important for our economy, but it is essential for American economic and national security.

American leadership on spectrum policy can lead to the private sector setting technology standards that benefit American technological leadership. It means trusted companies can develop

economies of scale, create jobs, and ensure that the technologies of the future promote American values and priorities.

As we develop our spectrum policy, we need to keep a number of principles in mind. First, we need a balanced approach between licensed and unlicensed uses of spectrum. Both licensed and unlicensed spectrum are key to bolstering U.S. technological leadership, and each provides economic benefits for the American public.

Next, we need to ensure we are utilizing every tool at our disposal to make spectrum available for commercial use. Advances in technology have made spectrum sharing more feasible, which will become more important as the process for identifying bands for auctioned, exclusive use becomes more complex, lengthy, and expensive.

Finally, we need to restore trust in the interagency spectrum coordination process. While federal missions must be protected, the executive branch must speak with one, unified voice so that spectrum management decisions are not called into question. As we look to extend spectrum auction authority and develop our spectrum policy, we need to ensure that all stakeholders are involved early in the process and that when decisions are made, agencies respect those decisions.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Thank you, and I yield to the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, the gentlelady from the Seventh District of California.