

**Opening Statement Chairman Bob Latta  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
“Oversight and Reauthorization of NTIA”  
May 23, 2023**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good morning, and welcome back before this subcommittee, Assistant Secretary Davidson. Today’s hearing is to provide oversight of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, and discuss reauthorization of the agency.

I will say I was disappointed that the Committee did not receive your testimony until last night. You’ve had plenty of notice about testifying before this committee and should have had no problem meeting the 48 hour requirement for testimony that this committee requires. I hope you remember that

next time you are before us and this does not happen again.

Since 1993 when NTIA was last reauthorized, the communications landscape has changed drastically.

NTIA has important statutory obligations to manage Federal-use spectrum, coordinate other Internet and communications functions between the Executive Branch, and support public safety communications initiatives. NTIA's budget has increased substantially as their duties have grown, Federal and non-Federal use of spectrum has intensified with the explosion of mobile phones and

improved technologies, and cybersecurity challenges have dramatically increased.

It is Congress's role, and specifically this Subcommittee's role, to oversee and authorize the agency's funding and priorities to ensure communications policy continues to benefit Americans and drive our economy.

Since our last oversight hearing, NTIA has submitted its 2024 budget request for \$117.3 million, nearly *double* its current authorization.

With this new budget request and several other new initiatives being implemented by NTIA, this hearing will serve as the first step in much-needed oversight and transparency into this agency.

For example, NTIA has formalized existing spectrum coordination procedures with the FCC by updating their memorandum of understanding, which members on this Committee had advocated for.

NTIA has also begun implementing several broadband subsidy programs. Today's oversight hearing is the first with NTIA since it published its Notice of Funding Opportunity, or NO-FO, for the BEAD Program. These NO-FOs include the rules of the road for how these programs will be administered. Getting these rules right is crucial and will ultimately determine whether all Americans are

connected or if they will continue to be left on the wrong side of the digital divide.

Today, we have 18 pieces of draft legislation to discuss during today's hearing to jump start discussion on NTIA's evolving mission and seek feedback from the agency. I am pleased to be leading the NTIA Reauthorization Act of 2023 to begin a bipartisan discussion on how Congress can ensure NTIA has the statutory tools it needs to fulfill its mission.

The NTIA Reauthorization Act would elevate the Assistant Secretary to an Under Secretary level, modernize the agency's policies and missions, and authorize its funding to match current funding levels.

Other discussion drafts on today's hearing would elevate NTIA's role in coordinating interagency broadband funding and permitting processes, support NTIA's Federal spectrum management mission, and reflect NTIA's expertise as a Federal coordinator and convener by granting authority to coordinate public safety and cybersecurity policy development and representation.

With the billions of dollars available for broadband deployment being managed by a variety of federal agencies, coordination will be key to ensuring that money isn't wasted. As the lead agency for broadband, NTIA should lead the development of a national broadband strategy. Other components of the reauthorization effort would require NTIA to lead efforts on developing common

models, methodologies, and inputs to inform spectrum management decisions, ensure NTIA benefits from the expertise of commercial spectrum users, and make reforms to Federal spectrum relocation processes.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for leading on the initiatives before us. The role of NTIA has drastically changed since it was last reauthorized, and I look forward to working with the agency and affected stakeholders to update its authorizing statute.

Finally, I am pleased we are beginning oversight efforts this Congress, which includes ensuring tax dollars allocated for broadband expansion are going toward unserved or underserved communities.

These oversight efforts will be the crucial link to help close the digital divide and make sure all Americans are connected by high-speed, broadband Internet.

I look forward to the discussion.