

**Opening Statement Chairman Robert E. Latta
Subcommittee Markup on [11] Bills
July 12, 2023
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

Good morning and welcome to today's subcommittee markup. We will be considering four pieces of legislation to reauthorize the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and provide the agency with new tools and direction to carry out its mission.

Reauthorizing agencies within our jurisdiction is an important duty of our Committee, and this is an opportune time to reauthorize NTIA, something we have not done since 1992. Today, NTIA plays a significant role in closing the digital divide, managing our nations spectrum, and advocating United States telecommunications positions on the world stage.

I am proud to lead the NTIA Reauthorization Act alongside the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee. This comprehensive legislation will ensure NTIA has the tools it needs to carry out its mission in the 21st century.

Congress recently provided NTIA with \$48.2 billion to address broadband deployment and digital equity and inclusion. This reauthorization is one way to ensure that NTIA has the tools it needs to effectively manage these programs.

Today's NTIA also plays a key role in our effort to maintain leadership in wireless communications. As federal spectrum manager, NTIA works with other federal agencies to ensure their spectrum

interests are protected while also working to identify spectrum that can be made available for commercial use.

My legislation would codify several key offices within the NTIA, including the Office of Spectrum Management, the Office of Public Safety Communications, the Office of International Affairs, the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences, and reinforces NTIA's role in cybersecurity policy by codifying and renaming the Office of Policy Development and Cybersecurity.

The bill also takes the long-needed action of elevating the head of NTIA from an Assistant Secretary to Under Secretary position. This promotion would underscore, in both the eyes of the

public and other federal agencies, the role that NTIA plays in connecting all Americans.

Finally, this legislation includes several measures led by my colleagues that direct the NTIA to draft a National Strategy to close the digital divide, conduct a cybersecurity literacy campaign, provide technical assistance for OpenRAN networks, and improve the coordination of federal spectrum efforts, and more. I want to thank my colleagues on this subcommittee for their leadership on these initiatives.

We will also consider several additional pieces of legislation today. The Spectrum Relocation Enhancement Act, introduced by the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, would make changes

to what costs are eligible for reimbursement from the Spectrum Relocation Fund, or SRF, how federal agencies receive these payments, and increase NTIA's oversight over SRF activities.

In addition to spectrum policy, we will consider the Artificial Intelligence Accountability Act, introduced by the gentleman from California's 9th District, which would direct NTIA to conduct a study on accountability measures for AI systems used by communications networks.

Finally, we will consider the Diaspora Link Act, introduced by the Delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands. This legislation would direct NTIA to submit a report to Congress assessing the feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic

cable connecting the contiguous United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

I would like to thank the members of the subcommittee for their work on these measures, and I am pleased that we are able to move forward on this bipartisan legislation today.

I look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to refine these measures as we move to a full committee markup.