

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone
Markup of 11 Bills, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
July 12, 2023

Today, we are marking up several bipartisan bills that collectively will reauthorize the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). These bills will ensure that this important agency has the authorities it needs to continue to oversee technological advancements in such areas as spectrum management and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The Subcommittee's action on these bills will also allow NTIA to continue making strides in helping connect all Americans to high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband. The NTIA is the primary federal agency implementing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's historic \$65 billion broadband investments that are finally giving us the opportunity to bridge the digital divide. These investments are going to help grow the economy and the middle class in communities throughout the nation that have simply been left behind for too long.

First, I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 4510, the NTIA Reauthorization Act, bipartisan legislation introduced by Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Matsui. This legislation reauthorizes NTIA and elevates its leadership in the Department of Commerce by making the Administrator position an Under Secretary of the agency. Taking these important steps will better reflect NTIA's importance in being the agency that serves as the President's primary advisor on telecommunications and technology policy.

This legislation includes the text of several bipartisan bills this Subcommittee has worked on, in some cases going back to last Congress. It includes the "PLAN for Broadband Act," co-led by Representatives Kuster and Walberg, which directs the NTIA to develop a national strategy to close the digital divide. As part of this strategy, the agency must develop a plan to monitor the consistency, affordability, and quality of broadband service supported by federal broadband programs. It also includes Representative Allred's "Open RAN Outreach Act", and two bills co-led by Representative Eshoo to address cybersecurity issues.

With the enormous responsibilities we give to NTIA through this legislation, it is critical that we not only reauthorize the agency, but also ensure that NTIA is fully funded for this upcoming fiscal year. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's investments will help bring broadband infrastructure to all corners of the nation, but in order to accomplish this monumental task, NTIA must be quickly reauthorized and fully funded.

We will also consider H.R. 3430, the Spectrum Relocation Enhancement Act, a bipartisan bill that Ranking Member Matsui introduced earlier this year. The legislation will enhance NTIA's federal spectrum relocation efforts by providing additional flexibility on the types of systems that federal entities can consider when evaluating the feasibility of relocating or sharing

their assigned spectrum resources. This flexibility will help ensure that these resources are being utilized in an efficient and effective manner.

We are also marking up H.R. 3369, the Artificial Intelligence Accountability Act, introduced by Representatives Harder and Kelly. This legislation directs NTIA to assess the degree to which AI systems are accountable to consumers and what measures are needed to reduce the risks surrounding them. While AI systems offer enormous potential, it is imperative that we have the tools to ensure they are designed with consumers in mind and to hold them accountable when they are not.

Finally, we will consider H.R. 3385, the Diaspora Link Act, introduced by Representative Plaskett. This bill will require NTIA to assess the value of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber cable connecting the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, to increase the security of our networks.

So let me say, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the work of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reach bipartisan agreement on these important bills so that we can consider them for markup today. There is still more work to do before we consider these proposals at a full Committee markup. I look forward to working with Chairs Rodgers and Latta, and Ranking Member Matsui so we can be sure to get the policies right and workable for the agency before we advance them to the full Committee.