Opening Statement for Chairman Richard Hudson
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
"Strengthening American Leadership in Wireless Technology"
Thursday, January 23, 2025

Introduction

Good morning, and welcome to the first hearing in the Communications and Technology subcommittee of the 119th Congress.

I am honored to serve as the Chairman of this subcommittee, where there's a rich history of identifying and addressing the most pressing issues raised in the communications and technology sectors.

As technology continues to advance, this subcommittee will be at the forefront of solving tough issues.

The subcommittee has historically worked in a bipartisan manner to solve many of the issues before us, and I plan to continue that tradition working with my Ranking Member, Representative Matsui (CA-07).

I have admired and respected her bipartisan work and accomplishments as a leader in this space and look forward to working together and learning from her.

I am grateful for the work Chairman Latta brought to this subcommittee and I'm looking forward to continuing it and learning from him as well.

I'm also excited to work with my Vice Chair Mr. Rick Allen, and all my colleagues on this subcommittee to advance important legislation this Congress.

U.S. Leadership

Our nation is the world's economic powerhouse, and we lead the world in innovation.

America is home to the best technology companies, both large and small. These companies lead in everything from next-generation wireless technology to all the emerging technologies that rely on connectivity, ranging from artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things to NextGen 9-1-1 and precision agriculture.

Our country's startup ecosystem is strong and should be fostered. This Committee must advance thoughtful policy that continues to grow American innovation and productivity rather than stifle it.

Next-generation wireless technology supports many of these technological advancements. It impacts nearly every sector of our economy, from powering everyday communication networks and advancements in healthcare and manufacturing, to being used for our national defense, something heavily present in my district at Fort Bragg, the home of our Special Forces and the largest military base in the world.

But if our wireless networks are going to keep pace with the speed of innovation, we need to make sure they have additional spectrum resources.

Spectrum is a crucial element for wireless technology to operate. Americans depend on connected devices in their everyday lives, and the congestion on our networks has skyrocketed.

Our wireless networks need to keep up.

As our wireless networks advance from 5G to 6G technology and beyond, the demand for spectrum will only continue to grow.

Spectrum Landscape

We must remember these important resources are finite. Managing these limited resources is vital to maintaining our economic dominance and protecting our national security.

We will take a balanced approach to making both licensed and unlicensed spectrum available.

This includes working with our federal partners such as the Department of Defense, which must have enough spectrum to defend the homeland, but also be held accountable to use their resources efficiently.

Last Congress, the Federal Communications Commission, or FCC's, spectrum auction authority expired for the first time due to disagreements about how spectrum resources should be allocated. These auctions have historically brought in **billions** to our national economy, with the highest spectrum auctions raising over $80 billion from private companies.

It is simple economics: there is limited supply, unlimited demand, and a willingness to pay. We need to reauthorize the FCC's spectrum auction authority immediately.

We must also continue looking for ways to make unlicensed spectrum available. Unlicensed spectrum unlocks the Internet of Things and smart device economy on which Americans rely, providing tremendous economic growth.

Under the first Trump Administration, more than 1,200 megahertz of unlicensed spectrum was made available in the 6 gigahertz band, leading to massive opportunities for innovation for our farmers, industrialists, and communities.

Securing our Networks

These successes are just a start.

However, as we progress, our adversaries are constantly trying to undermine our leadership in international standard setting bodies, through IP theft, and through cyberattacks. The U.S. must remain resolute in defending our leadership to safeguard democratic values, and

this happens by trusting in our private sector partners to address some of our nation's most pressing challenges.

We recently learned about "Salt Typhoon," which may be the largest Chinese-backed telecommunications hack in our nation's history.

As we deploy advanced networks and connected devices in an environment of Great Power Competition, we have to thoughtfully secure our networks every step of the way.

At the end of last year, I was glad to see Congress fund the removal of the remaining Chinese equipment in our communications networks.

China is producing cheap communications equipment at the cost of our national security, and that needs to change. We need trusted alternatives. Companies are working to develop and deploy Open RAN technology, which is intended to promote an ecosystem of trusted vendors for communications network equipment, and I look forward to hearing an update on its progress today.

Conclusion

The key to our success is working together with all stakeholders to deploy and secure our networks.

As our adversaries seek to undermine U.S. leadership, we will continue to build a comprehensive spectrum policy in the United States and a unified position on the international stage.

I look forward to discussing these issues more in depth with our witnesses today and discussing the future of spectrum policy in the United States.

I now yield five minutes to my colleague, Ranking Member Doris Matsui, for her opening statement.