

Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection
“Disrupter Series: Smart Communities”
March 16, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

Local communities are the laboratories of American ideas and innovation. As we will hear today, many communities across our country have adopted technology to improve their citizens’ quality of life. But counties, cities, towns, and parishes all face the same questions when they evaluate new technology and projects. Many communities are still working to understand how to adopt, and when to adopt, technology that will improve efficiency, increase accessibility, and streamline everyday tasks for their citizens.

Several organizations, including the Department of Transportation, have worked to discover what projects local governments were interested in pursuing and hear from residents about the projects that they think would be most advantageous in pursuing. In total, seventy-eight cities submitted applications for DOT’s Smart Cities Challenge, and today I look forward to hearing from some of the finalists about their proposals. Particularly how they have engaged with folks in their communities to gather ideas or encourage adoption.

The innovation agenda for this subcommittee includes promoting many technologies that have natural applications for local governments but we must acknowledge the challenges. These ideas may face difficulties with both funding and adoption. There are also important data sharing, cybersecurity, and privacy issues that need to be addressed when government entities are engaging with private companies to provide transportation, energy, or other community services. My hope is that we can explore many of these issues during today’s hearing and into the future.

Today, we have the chance to hear from several cities and other experts who are on the front lines of finding the value proposition for deploying smart community technology. I would especially like to thank Mr. Chisek from my home state of Oregon for being here to talk about the projects that Portland is working on, as the

City of Portland has been a national leader on these issues. Thank you all for being here.