

Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Subcommittee Markup”
October 11, 2017

Good afternoon.

Today we take a step forward in our efforts to modernize America’s outdated communications laws by reauthorizing the FCC – a task that has not been completed since 1990.

Without a doubt, much has changed since the last reauthorization of the Commission. The last time this agency was authorized, we were still a year away from the first-ever website, and cell phones could do little more than make a phone call.

Now, we all carry super computers in our pockets and rely heavily on forms of media that didn’t even exist when the agency was last authorized. Our communications laws continue to lag behind, one of the many reasons this Committee has prioritized a return to regular order and reauthorizing agencies within our jurisdiction.

The Discussion Draft before us today makes important changes to the Commission’s fee collection authority and includes a number of process reforms that will maximize the agency’s transparency and efficiency. The draft also includes a number of bipartisan measures, including provisions that enhance public safety, ensure call reliability, and improve broadband coverage data collection.

While this draft incorporates many important technical amendments and policy changes, there are still issues before this Committee that need to be addressed. For example, last month we held a hearing on the broadcaster repacking process and heard about the challenges associated with completing the process on time and on budget. We hope to have further discussion on these issues between now and the time this draft is considered by the Full Committee.

I want to thank my Subcommittee colleagues for their engagement on these issues and I look forward to advancing this bill to the Full Committee.