

Rep. Leonard Lance
Legislative Hearing on Four Telecom Bills
Opening Statement

Thank you Madam Chairman and thank you to our distinguished panel for appearing before us today.

I am pleased we are considering the Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement, or PIRATE, Act.

Unlicensed FM and AM radio operators are a significant harm to public safety and public health. By disrupting and interfering with licensed broadcasts, these “pirate radios” can cause radio listeners to miss important updates during times of emergency by blocking the Emergency Alert System. As they do not adhere to FCC regulations, pirate radios also emit a harmful level of Radio Frequency radiation, posing a health risk to nearby residents and workers.

I commend Chairman Pai and Commissioner O’Rielly for their leadership in enforcing against pirate radio operators at the FCC. However, as Commissioner O’Rielly has stated before this subcommittee, the FCC’s current enforcement tools are not sufficient to eliminate these bad actors. My bill would increase the FCC’s ability to crackdown on pirates by increasing the maximum fine, streamlining enforcement and holding facilitators liable among other things.

I thank Congressmen Tonko, Collins and Bilirakis for their leadership on this issue and for working with me on this important legislation. Our states are among the most affected by pirate radio operators in the country and I am pleased we are able to work bipartisanly to protect our constituents from these menaces to public safety and health.

Thank you also to David Donovan from the New York Broadcasters for your advocacy on this issue and for testifying today. I look forward to our discussion.