

Opening Statement of Chairman Bob Latta
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection
“Internet of Things Legislation”
May 22, 2018

Good Morning and welcome to this legislative hearing on the Internet of Things. Today we will discuss the bipartisan State of Modern Application, Research, and Trends of IoT Act or the SMART IoT Act discussion draft.

The SMART IoT Act discussion draft is the result of work the Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee has done over the past two years. Last July, this Subcommittee held an Internet of Things Showcase. At that event, Members invited companies from our Districts and across America to demonstrate products and services in the IoT field. It was a wonderful opportunity to see this revolutionary work up close and interact with the inventors doing this important work. To accompany that Showcase, we held a hearing where participants from the Showcase discussed their companies, challenges they face with growing in this space and what we, as policymakers, can do to help promote the continued development of IoT solutions.

This January we held a hearing on the state of manufacturing in the IoT space and over the following months we met with other builders, suppliers, customers and experts to better understand IoT’s enormous potential.

This technology is having a real-life impact for many of our constituents. I’ve personally met with manufacturers in my district that are using this cutting-edge technology to maintain their machinery and keep production on track. I also met with farmers in Defiance, Ohio who are using IoT for better grain management, increased planting and harvesting efficiency, and improved monitoring of the temperature in their storage facilities.

The draft legislation we will discuss today is the result of important bipartisan work after hearing from the experts where we noticed one lingering question—what does the universe of rules, regulations, guidelines, and best practices look like for the IoT space?

While we know there are many other topics of interest in this space, this legislation kicks off a process to give all stakeholders a base set of information to frame the other challenges without speculating or hypothesizing about what already exists.

The IoT is already revolutionizing the way that we organize factories and supply chains, transport commodities like oil and gas, make manufacturing more efficient, maximize energy efficiency, and even restock our refrigerators.

This subcommittee has engaged in historic bipartisan work with the SELF DRIVE Act this Congress and I am pleased to see that cooperation continue with the SMART IoT Act discussion draft. When safely applied to autonomous vehicles the Internet of Things holds the potential to significantly reduce traffic fatalities, and make our roads safer while also reducing costs through more efficient fuel consumption.

In these areas and more, the IoT holds the potential to greatly improve the lives of Americans.

I thank my colleague, Representative Welch, for his willingness to continue our work together on this very important issue. As many here know, in previous congresses Representative Welch and I started the Internet of Things Working Group. We heard from industry and other stakeholders about the importance of light-touch regulation to foster innovation and jobs here in the U.S. This bipartisan draft is a result of the lessons learned in those meetings, this subcommittee's Disrupter Series hearings, and lays the groundwork for constructive conversations in the future. The SMART IoT Act will give all stakeholders, both in private industry and at the Federal level, a better sense of what guidelines and best practices exist or are in development.

As we all know, IoT issues cut across so many industries and so many Federal agencies. Ensuring that we know about overlaps or potential duplication is important for many reasons from ensuring efficient use of government resources to understanding how stakeholders are addressing some of the important but challenging issues of privacy and data security.

From the Department of Commerce's efforts to foster the advancement of the IoT ecosystem to the Department of Transportation's focus on advancing automated vehicle, so much work is going on in this space. We want to encourage interagency collaboration and foster an environment where transparency is key. Likewise, I would like to ensure that the environment for innovation in the U.S. across all of these industries remains a priority by optimizing our own efforts to promote good, consistent government. I believe the SMART IoT Act is an important step in doing just that.