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**Pallone Statement at Full Committee Markup of Opioid, Pipeline
Safety and Communications Bills**

Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) today gave the following opening statement at a Full Committee Markup of 22 bills.

Thank you Chairman for calling today's markup. While I cannot support every single bill being considered, I am grateful for all the hard work of our staffs for the many bipartisan bills that will be marked up over the next two days.

In particular, I am proud that part of our agenda today are 12 bills that aim to address the alarmingly growing trend of opioid addiction. We all know too well the devastation this crisis is creating in our communities. The bills, which are all bipartisan and include the work of our Committee members and others, address an array of policies that focus on the continuum of care – prevention, treatment and recovery.

While these are important steps, Congressional Republicans continue to reject calls to provide resources proportionate to the severity of this crisis. Congress must dedicate additional resources to address opioid abuse.

We also have nine telecommunications bills slated for this markup. I am grateful to Chairman Upton and Chairman Walden for including a number of Democratic bills among this group. These are good bills and should garner bipartisan support.

One of those bills is my own Securing Access to Networks in Disasters—or SANDy—Act. This bill seeks to ensure that consumers have access to essential communications networks when we need them most in an emergency. I am happy to report that the wireless industry has heard my concerns. They have been working closely with my office and the FCC to reach an agreement that will address many of the elements included in my bill.

I hope to finalize that deal and announce details before the bill comes up for a vote.

I am also happy that the Republicans decided not to markup their harmful Lifeline bill. That bill would rip phones out of the hands of millions of Americans who need the most help.

However, I am disappointed that they pulled a last minute switch for three other FCC process bills. I do not understand why the Republicans need to make a mockery of our own procedures every time they want to talk about the FCC's process. While Democrats will do our best to improve these bills, these types of partisan tactics make it appear that the Republicans are not serious about legislating on these important FCC-related issues.

With regard to pipeline safety, I want to thank the Chairman for working with me and our Members to improve the legislation reported by the Subcommittee. The vast network of energy pipelines in this country are essentially "out of sight, out of mind" for most Americans. But when something goes wrong, these facilities can make themselves known in devastating and sometimes deadly ways.

While the proposal before us is not the bill that either of us would write left to our own devices, it does represent a reasonable, balanced compromise that addresses, at least in some form, a number of the concerns raised by Democrats during the Energy and Power Subcommittee's markup. It is certainly superior to the legislation passed by the Senate and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in supporting its passage today.

Thank you. I yield back the remainder of my time.

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