

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Chairman Pai,

We're writing in response to recent troubling press reports that a radio network funded by the Russian government may have used U.S. airwaves to influence the 2016 presidential election. We ask that you investigate these troubling reports and apply all applicable laws and regulations to enforce the public interest standard for licensed stations that broadcast this network.

An article published by the *New York Times Magazine* (9/13/17) titled "RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War" suggests that Sputnik, a radio network funded by the Russian government, was used as part of the Kremlin's effort to influence the 2016 presidential election. In Washington, D.C., listeners can tune their radios to 105.5 FM to hear Sputnik and the Russian government's effort to spread misinformation to influence U.S. policy and undermine our elections. This means the Kremlin's propaganda is being broadcast over a license granted by the FCC and the Russian government may be using our country's own airwaves to undermine our democracy.

The Communications Act of 1934 requires the FCC to take action to ensure broadcast licenses act in the public interest, convenience, and necessity. If Sputnik is in fact being used as a tool by the Russian government to undermine the United States and our free and fair electoral process, the station airing Sputnik is directly violating the public interest standard of the Communications Act.

We've written to you previously regarding issues arising from the over-the-air television broadcast of Russia Today. Sputnik's alleged role in the Russian campaign to influence the 2016 election raises the same concerns and violates the public interest by giving a foreign government a microphone to spread propaganda. The Commission must look into the allegations that Sputnik is being used by the Russian government to disseminate misinformation and influence our elections and be prepared to take action. We therefore request that you provide answers to the following questions:

- (1) Is the FCC currently investigating whether broadcast licensees are contravening the public interest by retransmitting radio programming funding by the Russian government in an effort to influence U.S. politics and elections?
- (2) If not, will the FCC commit to undertaking such an investigation?

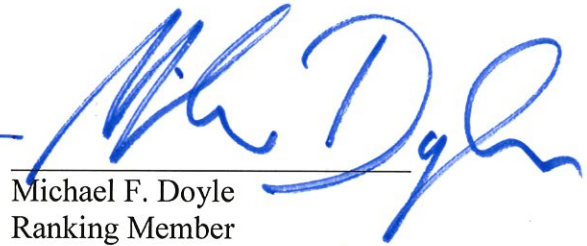
- (3) If the allegations in the above described reports are true, will the FCC commit to enforcing the public interest standard on stations that broadcast Sputnik, in accordance with applicable law and regulations?
- (4) If the FCC were to take action against a station being used to undermine our democracy, what specific steps could the FCC take?

We thank you for your attention to this critically important issue and ask for your timely response.

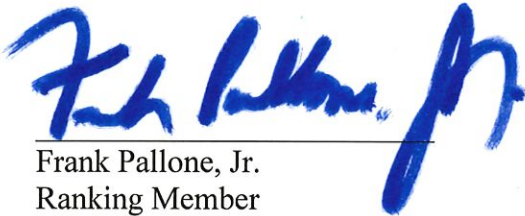
Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo
Member
Subcommittee on Communications &
Technology



Michael F. Doyle
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications &
Technology



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce