

**Testimony of Anna M. Gomez
Partner, Wiley Rein LLP
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information for
the National Telecommunications and Information Administration,
U.S. Department of Commerce**

**Before the
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Reauthorization of NTIA
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Chairman Blackburn, Ranking Member Doyle, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to share my thoughts regarding the important work performed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and its dedicated staff.

From January 2009 through March 2013, I had the honor of serving as NTIA's Deputy Administrator, including a stint as Acting Administrator from February 2009 through June 2009. I am proud to have served our nation alongside the many committed professionals in the Department of Commerce and at NTIA.

Given the large and growing contribution of technology to our broader economy, sound technology policy that supports investment and innovation is critical. As former NTIA Administrator Strickling said in December, "tech policy

is now intrinsically and irrevocably linked to our country's overall economic prosperity.”¹

NTIA has an important and often under-appreciated portfolio in this regard. First and foremost, Congress -- through this Committee’s efforts -- in 1992 enshrined NTIA’s “authority to serve as the President’s principal advisor on telecommunications policies pertaining to the Nation’s economic and technological advancement and to the regulation of the telecommunications industry.” As such, NTIA is responsible for formulating the Administration’s telecommunications and information policy, a role that has grown in importance and breadth with the evolution of our digital economy.

Congress has entrusted NTIA with many responsibilities:

- NTIA advises the U.S. government and works with private-sector and civil society stakeholders on Internet policies, including convening multistakeholder processes to address challenges in this field such as cybersecurity and privacy questions. NTIA represents the Administration in discussions and negotiations regarding Internet governance.

¹ Remarks of Assistant Secretary Lawrence E. Strickling, *The 5G Wireless Future and the Rule of the Federal Government*, Remarks to the Hudson Institute (Dec. 16, 2016), available at <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/speechtestimony/2016/remarks-assistant-secretary-strickling-5g-wireless-future-and-role-federal>.

- NTIA works, in coordination with other agencies, to ensure the free flow of data across borders.
- NTIA plays a key role in public safety communications. It works with FirstNet in implementing the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. NTIA will have a key role in the future of the nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network.
- NTIA has experience managing various federal grant programs for broadband, public safety, and Next Generation 911.
- NTIA conducts research and testing in radio frequency science and technologies through its Institute for Telecommunication Sciences.

I would like to briefly address some of these responsibilities in further detail.

Spectrum Policy

Spectrum has been described as “the currency of the wireless industry,” but in reality it goes much further. Wireless is the backbone of 21st century education, commerce, and government. Our dependency on wireless networks and the spectrum that powers them continues to grow at an exponential rate. We are in the midst of a virtuous cycle, where the availability of wireless networks, with increasing speed and reliability, encourages the development of new and innovative edge technologies, in turn spurring further investment in our wireless

networks. For this level of innovation to continue, however, we must be able to deliver the spectrum needed to power the wireless technologies of the future.

NTIA's role as our country's federal agency spectrum manager helps provide the proper framework for the development of tomorrow's technologies. The agency has played an integral role in working to make additional spectrum available for wireless broadband uses. It utilizes the resources of the Office of Spectrum Management and the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences to meet these demands. The Institute for Telecommunication Sciences provides valuable research and analysis to inform the Office of Spectrum Management as NTIA works to identify additional spectrum efficiencies and potential opportunities to increase spectrum access for all users.

With increasing demand for wireless technology showing no signs of abating, the need for an experienced and knowledgeable manager of our federal agencies' spectrum resources is ongoing.

Internet Policy

The U.S. must ensure continued trust in the privacy and security of the Internet, which is necessary to facilitate the continued free flow of information around the world. American businesses in the digital space, both large and small, depend on an online digital ecosystem that has the confidence of potential users

and customers. It is imperative that the Department of Commerce, and namely NTIA, is at the table in policy discussions related to practices that may affect the digital economy.

NTIA's objectives are "to advance inclusive multistakeholder methods of developing information policy and preserve an open, interconnected global Internet that supports continued innovation and economic growth, investment, and the trust of its users."² NTIA represents the Administration internationally, including serving as member of the U.S. delegation to International Telecommunication Union (ITU) conferences and as an active participant of the Internet Coalition for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN's) deliberations. NTIA should continue its strong voice to ensure all stakeholders, including the U.S. Government, have a voice in the domain name governance system.

As the challenges of Internet-related policies continue to evolve and present themselves, it is critical to have a strong NTIA that can help the U.S. Government represent U.S. interests in setting productive policies that allow for continued innovation and growth in the global digital economy.

² U.S. Department of Commerce, *The Department of Commerce Budget in Brief: Fiscal Year 2017* 131, available at <http://www.osec.doc.gov/bmi/budget/FY17BIB/AllFilesWithCharts2.pdf>.

Broadband

NTIA over the past decade has had a strong focus on increasing broadband access and adoption in a number of ways. The agency invested more than \$4 billion in grants through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). These funds helped build sustainable infrastructure, establish public computer centers, and develop digital literacy training. While this program is winding down, it invested in lasting projects that increase access and adoption of broadband throughout the country. Recently, NTIA also Co-chaired the Broadband Opportunity Council – a collaboration of 25 federal agencies and departments that work with industry stakeholders to better support the needs of communities seeking broadband investment. I understand NTIA continues to work on increasing interagency coordination in this area. Through its BroadbandUSA program, NTIA also continues to sponsor a series of publications, webinars, and conferences designed to help stakeholders overcome obstacles to broadband access and adoption.

Public Safety

NTIA helps ensure that our nation's telecommunications resources adequately support the needs of the public safety community.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 helped implement a key recommendation of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission by creating the First Responder Network Authority, or FirstNet, and charging it with deploying, maintaining and operating a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. FirstNet is an initiative near and dear to my heart. Working closely with Administrator Strickling, I was personally very involved in standing up FirstNet, and believe strongly in its mission to provide broadband services to all first responders. NTIA continues to have a role in the roll-out of FirstNet through grants to states for planning, as well as oversight of FirstNet's fees and the State Alternative Plan Program.

NTIA is also charged with administering grants to promote Next Generation 911 at public safety answering points across the country in coordination with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Conclusion

NTIA should continue its important role coordinating federal policies in areas such as spectrum, broadband, Internet policy, public safety, and research. In an area like technology policy, where there are many agencies with overlapping jurisdiction, it is critical to have an agency like NTIA to shepherd interagency

activities, and bring some thought and rigor to priorities and interagency coordination so there is less duplication of effort for the private sector.

One example is with policies regarding the “Internet of Things” (“IoT”). NTIA can spearhead a coordinated federal policy to encourage the growth and development of the IoT. Myriad agencies have oversight over different components or uses of IoT devices. IoT implicates spectrum policy, cybersecurity, and privacy concerns, among other issues. These are just some of the areas in which NTIA has expertise and can show leadership. In the absence of a central approach to governance in technology policies, such as with IoT, we risk having inconsistent and burdensome requirements that threaten the health of the sector, innovation and interoperability of systems. NTIA can and should play an important role in convening and guiding the numerous agencies and ensuring consistent federal policies that promote innovation.

NTIA also should continue its efforts to identify barriers to broadband deployment, and to push interagency efforts to streamline processes or eliminate requirements that slow down infrastructure deployment, such as environmental reviews or access to federal lands.

Many Congressional leaders have stressed that any Infrastructure plan should include broadband projects. While the details of the plan have not yet been announced, I believe NTIA is well-positioned to manage any grants or other

funding that would promote broadband access and adoption. Any new program would benefit from the expertise and experiences NTIA staff developed while managing BTOP.

In remarks late last year, Administrator Strickling provided some advice on future efforts to expand broadband access and adoption. For example, he recommended making sustainability a top priority. As Administrator Strickling observed, “It makes little sense to utilize tax dollars to provide the capital to construct a project, if the project cannot generate the operating revenue needed to sustain that network in the future.”³ He also recommended ensuring that dollars are provided to organizations that have a proven record of building and managing a broadband network and give them the flexibility to design sustainable projects.

NTIA has the experience and skills necessary to put these principles into action and make better, faster broadband networks more ubiquitous than ever.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my thoughts with you this morning. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

³ See Remarks of Assistant Secretary Lawrence E. Strickling, *Transforming Communities: Broadband Goals for 2017 and Beyond* (Nov. 30, 2016), available at <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/speechtestimony/2016/remarks-assistant-secretary-strickling-transforming-communities-broadband-goals>.