

**Written Statement of**

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**Introduction**

Chairman Latta, Chair Rodgers, Ranking Member Matsui, Ranking Member Pallone, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

By law, NTIA serves as the President's advisor on telecommunications and information policy. We are serving in that role at a historic time, one filled with both challenge and opportunity.

When I last appeared before this subcommittee, I had just taken the oath of office, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law had recently been signed into law, and much work lay ahead. Just over a year later, I'm proud to report on the progress we've made toward the bipartisan initiatives that Congress tasked to NTIA.

First, connecting everyone in America to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet service, no matter where they live;

Second, maintaining American leadership in wireless innovation by developing a national spectrum strategy, pipeline, and data-driven processes for long-term spectrum planning; and

Third, developing policies that will make for a better Internet – one that offers privacy, security, openness, and trust.

**Internet for All**

I'll start with our work to bridge the digital divide.

The Internet is now *the* essential tool for communications in our modern world. It is essential for access to work. Access to education. Access to healthcare.

And yet today, here in America, millions of people across the country lack access to a high-speed Internet connection or lack the means and the skills to use it.

That's about to change. We have been talking about the digital divide in this country for more than 20 years. But thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and other funding programs, we now have the resources to do something serious about it.

It's been almost exactly one year since we launched the Internet for All initiative with the release of our first Notices of Funding Opportunity. That initiative has a simple and ambitious mission: to connect everyone in America to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service. I am proud of what we have accomplished in the last year to further that goal.

Every state and eligible territory has applied to participate in both the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment, or BEAD, program and our Digital Equity Planning Grant program. By the end of last year, NTIA had issued more than \$307 million in BEAD and Digital Equity planning grants to all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

The development of these plans is critical given that at its core, BEAD is a state and territory grant program. And supporting states and territories in that effort is our Internet for All team's primary focus for the remainder of this year. We now have Federal Program Officers covering every state and territory, providing on-the-ground assistance to support the submission of 56 high-quality plans this year.

While these programs are still in the important planning stages, NTIA has also been funding projects that can get shovels in the ground and devices in people's hands *quickly*. One place where funding is needed most is on Tribal lands – some of the least connected areas in the country. But we're working to change that. In the last year-and-a-half we have awarded 157 grants totaling more than \$1.77 billion through our Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, serving 230 Tribal Governments. These grants will be used for broadband deployment on tribal lands, as well as for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion activities.

Also in the last year, NTIA has awarded nearly \$263 million in Connecting Minority Communities grants to 93 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Minority Serving Institutions, and Tribal colleges and universities. This program helps schools pay for Internet access and devices, or to hire and train information technology personnel. These grants are already helping people in need: from the grandmother in Oklahoma who made a fresh start as a fiber technician to a member of Navajo Nation in Arizona who was able to go back to school thanks to a new device and hotspot.

Finally, in the coming months we will be announcing awards in our \$1 billion Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure program. This program will support deployment of high-capacity national and regional networks and lower the cost of the last mile networks states will use to connect homes and small businesses. NTIA received 262 applications requesting nearly \$7.5 billion in funding, showing the great need for middle mile capacity throughout the country.

## **Spectrum**

As we bridge the digital divide at home, we are likewise determined to maintain the United States' global leadership in advanced wireless technologies and services.

One of the first steps I took when I joined NTIA was to establish a Spectrum Coordination Initiative with Chairwoman Rosenworcel and the FCC.

Last August we announced an updated Memorandum of Understanding between our agencies on spectrum coordination. This was the first update to the MOU in nearly 20 years, and it's already paying dividends as our two agencies navigate complex issues *together*.

NTIA, in coordination with the FCC, and Federal Departments and Agencies through the Policy and Plans Steering Group, is developing a new National Spectrum Strategy to develop a roadmap to make spectrum resources available to continue U.S. leadership in advanced wireless technology and services, establish data-driven processes for long-term spectrum planning, optimize spectrum use by considering different types of spectrum governance models, invest in and promote the development of emerging spectrum management technology, and develop an enduring and scalable mechanism for managing shared spectrum access for the Federal Government.

We want to identify 1500 megahertz of spectrum to study for future potential repurposing—an ambitious but achievable goal.

We must find ways to allow for more intensive use of this finite resource. And we have to do all this in a coordinated fashion. We must account for the existing uses and future needs of relevant stakeholders and ensure that new spectrum uses are balanced with existing and future federal agency operations and that we do not compromise national security or public safety.

### **Internet Policy**

With all our efforts to bring more people online, we also need to work on building a better Internet.

One pressing issue when we think about Internet policy is the growth of artificial intelligence systems. As President Biden said earlier this year, “AI can help deal with some very difficult challenges like disease and climate change, but we also have to address the potential risks to our society, to our economy, to our national security.” Responsible AI innovation is going to bring enormous benefits to people. But AI is only going to succeed if we address its risks and harms.

That's why NTIA issued a request for comment and is seeking public feedback on what policies can support the development of audits, assessments, and other mechanisms to create earned trust in AI systems. Our inquiry will help inform recommendations for policymakers on how to verify AI systems work as claimed and do not cause harm.

Another pressing issue is privacy. Americans are concerned about how their personal data is collected and used online. The Administration has called for a comprehensive federal privacy law, one with clear limits on how companies can collect, use, and share highly personal data.

We know there are few areas where the consequences of these practices are more starkly felt than in violations of the privacy and security of marginalized or underserved communities. To

address this issue, in January, NTIA issued a Request for Comment on how we can increase our vigilance at the intersection of privacy and civil rights. Our inquiry will help us analyze the outsized consequences that data practices can have on marginalized groups and make specific recommendations on solutions.

### **Domestic and International Policy**

As we strive for a safer Internet at home, we continue our work to promote our values around the world. Last year, NTIA worked with the State Department and other agencies to elect Doreen Bogdan-Martin as Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). In addition to being the first woman to be elected Secretary General in the ITU's 157-year history and the first American since 1965, Ms. Bogdan-Martin has been a passionate advocate for bridging the digital divide around the world. I'm also proud to say that she began her career at NTIA.

We are also working to ensure that our wireless networks—and those of our allies around the globe—are more secure and resilient. This summer, we will award the first grants from our \$1.5 billion Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund to improve the diversity, resiliency, and cybersecurity of the wireless equipment ecosystem.

And internationally, we continue to grow the list of countries committed to investing in open, interoperable network technologies to ensure competition among companies from trusted nations.

Perhaps no one is more reliant on trusted and secure mobile communications than America's first responders. We have been pleased with the growth and continued success of the FirstNet Authority. Today, FirstNet has over 4.7 million subscribers from the first responder community. FirstNet's new executive director, Joe Wassel, brings decades of leadership at the Department of Defense, including overseeing DoD's implementation of FirstNet across its 150,000 first responders. His leadership and experience will be vital as FirstNet implements the next generation of its highly successful network.

To do their jobs well, first responders need access to the kind of cutting-edge technology that many consumers take for granted. NTIA appreciates Congress' leadership on and support for Next Generation 911 to make sure they do.

### **Reauthorization**

Congress tasked NTIA with an ambitious agenda – to bring Internet service to everyone; support U.S. leadership and competitiveness in wireless innovation and networks; and develop policies that support privacy, security, openness, and trust. And we have more to do in 2023 and beyond.

I have made it a priority to build an organization to meet this historic moment. I welcome the conversation about modernizing NTIA's existing authority and the important work that Congress has entrusted to us.

Thank you for inviting me to appear here today. I welcome your questions and look forward to working with this Subcommittee to execute our important missions.