



Senator Sullivan's Questions for the Record
For
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein

Question 1. The construction season in Alaska is shorter than most. This does not allow for delays caused by roadblocks in the federal permitting process. How can we improve the timeliness of permitting on federal lands?

The current process for siting wireless infrastructure on federal lands is fraught with complications. Each landholding agency has their own process for siting, with different requirements and often different fees. PCIA has worked closely with Members of both the House and Senate on legislation to streamline and expedite the process. It would be very helpful, for example, if all federal landholding agencies were required to use a common set of forms and contracts. Further, providing leases with a public and transparent fee schedule would provide the necessary certainty when deciding whether to invest in new infrastructure and shorten the timeline for individual site specific fee negotiations. The availability of long term leases and automatic renewal would also improve the federal siting process, as would fee retention for the landholding agency.

Question 2. One of our carriers in Alaska experienced delays and increased costs in getting permission to install towers in building out their network. This situation involved only a few towers, with a small footprint, in a large national wildlife refuge. Is this a situation where a “shot clock” could help speed up the permitting process?

Yes. Applying a reasonable time limit on siting applications is helpful in the build-out of wireless broadband infrastructure on federal or state lands. PCIA members are often frustrated with unreasonable and unnecessary delays in obtaining permits. It is not necessary to usurp local authority, but only receive a timely “yes” or “no” answer from the local government or agency.

Question 3. Alaska has some of the most remote, sparsely populated communities in the US. Access to high speed broadband Internet enables these communities to connect locally and globally. Given Alaska's topography, and the remoteness of many communities, there is a strong need for wireless broadband to help serve these unserved and underserved communities. Considering that the Wireless Infrastructure Association (PCIA) works with federal, state, and local governments to remove barriers to wireless broadband deployment, how does PCIA work

with Alaska Native leaders to identify and overcome barriers to wireless broadband deployment on Alaska Native lands?

I have visited Alaskan Native lands and leaders in your state, and recognize the pressing need for connectivity there. PCIA has consistently highlighted that wireless is the most cost-effective infrastructure for low-density regions. Wireless infrastructure has the power to provide rural areas like those in Alaska the ability to compete in the innovation economy. One of the barriers to deployment in rural areas that PCIA has emphasized is access to federal lands and property. Many of them that would benefit from streamlined siting are by definition rural. Having better access to federal lands and property will help increase broadband availability in rural areas. PCIA recognizes that much of Alaska is Alaska Native land. We have worked with Native leaders through organizing and participating in workshops at the FCC that provide education on tribal wireless siting review processes and the importance of broadband deployment on Native lands. PCIA has also forged relationships with Tribal Historic Preservation Office leaders by inviting them to attend and speak at our Wireless Infrastructure Show.

Senator Rubio's Questions for the Record
For
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein

Question 1. I've introduced The Wireless Innovation Act to free up more spectrum for commercial use and to streamline wireless infrastructure deployment, particularly on federal property. I'd like to know whether within the federal government there are agencies that your members find to be particularly challenging?

The myriad of processes and procedures among different federal agencies often poses insurmountable obstacles to siting wireless infrastructure on federal property. PCIA strongly supports the Wireless Innovation Act ("WIA") you introduced because, among other important provisions, it includes a number of critical reforms to the federal siting process. WIA would be a tremendous help in making the siting process on federal property friendlier to wireless broadband buildout. A more standard approach to siting would allow easier interaction with agencies borne of varied histories and comprised of different cultures and values. The agencies have good people doing good work, but to date there have been bad processes or a lack of processes. Congress is well suited to provide direction and clarity that is otherwise lacking in the broadband deployment process on federal lands today.

Just recently, the GSA indicated that it has at last taken steps to implement some of the siting provisions included in Section 6409 of the 2012 legislation and that would be required under the

Wireless Innovation Act. From what you know of GSA's actions, have they acted in a way that will expedite the process for siting on federal properties? If not, what remains to be done?

PCIA commends GSA's recent actions to follow its statutory mandates, albeit they late in implementing them. Its actions are certainly a step in the right direction but much more needs to be done. For instance, all landholding federal agencies are not currently mandated to use the GSA forms or contracts. Without a requirement to standardize these forms across agencies, GSA's actions could be for naught. In addition, further congressional action is necessary to encourage long-term leases, swift renewal processes, and publicly available fee schedules. Moreover, without individuals at each agency who understand the important federal mandate to spur broadband deployment and are empowered to approve or deny applications that have stalled at the field level, these projects will languish or will be abandoned. Even in light of GSA's recent actions, many of the provisions contained in the Wireless Innovation Act are necessary to further improve the process to site wireless facilities on federal lands.

Senator Fischer's Questions for the Record
For
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein

Question 1. Mr. Adelstein, in your written testimony, you discussed challenges related to the "wireless data crunch." You also provided several examples of how to address the challenge including spectrum access, efficiencies, and infrastructure. Can you please expand upon your comments, particularly as it relates to infrastructure solutions and rural consumers?

As I mentioned in my testimony, there is today an abundance of choices available to network planners to address the wireless data crunch. Traditional tall support structures effectively provide much of the coverage and capacity necessary for wireless broadband. To fill coverage gaps and overlay capacity in high traffic markets, the industry is also increasingly deploying distributed antennas systems and small cells. Further, the networks themselves are getting smarter. Self-optimizing networks and the combination of intelligent software and hardware design allows a network to anticipate usage and provide greater resources to areas of need on the fly, enhancing the user experience. Unlicensed spectrum similarly continues to play an important role in this system, offloading traffic to the wired network and providing greater headroom for licensed mobile services. Today's infrastructure will provide the cornerstone of the Internet of Things, 5G, and the applications, services, and jobs that will make up the economy of tomorrow. This is especially true in rural areas. As technology improves, it may become easier to serve rural communities. Now, network planners have an abundance of choices to serve a diverse set of areas.

Question 2. Earlier this year Senator Klobuchar and I introduced the Rural Spectrum Accessibility Act, which would incentivize wireless carriers to lease unused spectrum to smaller rural carriers. Have any of the witnesses had an opportunity to review this proposal or others to incentivize spectrum sharing? Do you believe this would help expand access?

As I mentioned in my testimony, we need as much spectrum as we can get, as fast as we can get it. Whether it's new spectrum or reusing or repurposing current spectrum allocations, it is important to look at all potential solutions to ensure that all Americans and all communities are able to enjoy the enormous benefits that comes from wireless broadband.