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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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May 10, 2019

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

American leadership in Fifth Generation telecommunications technology (5G) is critical for the economic well-being and security of America. Winning the race to 5G requires world-leading technology, access to spectrum on which 5G systems will operate, and the ability to deploy services to the American people, including Americans in rural areas.

While American companies and those of other western nations are leading the way on technology, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) plays a crucial role with regard to spectrum and deployment. Under your leadership, the FCC has made enormous progress in addressing both of these issues. In particular, the FCC has streamlined deployment and moved prudently but with great speed to bring millimeter wave spectrum to market, completing successful auctions for spectrum in the 24 GHz and 28 GHz bands, and preparing for auctions in the 37 GHz, 39 GHz, and 47 GHz bands.

As the Commission has noted, mid-band spectrum offers favorable signal range and indoor penetration combined with increased capacity that comes from frequency reuse; this makes mid-band spectrum particularly important for the initial deployment of 5G. This is especially the case in America's rural areas, where population density makes deployment of millimeter wave spectrum less economical than in urban areas. Currently, the United States lags far behind our competitors in the availability of mid-band spectrum for 5G. While Citizens Band Radio Service will make 70 MHz of licensed spectrum available under a novel licensing scheme, much more is needed.

In MOBILE NOW Congress directed the FCC to evaluate commercial wireless use of spectrum in the 3.7 GHz to 4.2 GHz band, and the Commission has begun the process. In the year since passage of that law, the need for action has become even more acute. It has been estimated that accelerating infrastructure deployment by one year could drive an additional \$100 billion in economic impact in the next three years. Therefore, we urge the Commission to act quickly to make spectrum in the 3.7 GHz to 4.2 GHz band available for 5G.

Your action to speed up the availability of mid-band spectrum for 5G will play a crucial role in determining whether the American people will reap the full benefits of next-generation technology, and whether the United States will win the massive economic benefits associated with leading the world in 5G. Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued commitment to achieving U.S. global leadership in 5G.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
CHAIRMAN
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation



John Thune
CHAIRMAN
Subcommittee on
Communications,
Technology, Innovation, and
the Internet

Cc: Hon. Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation