

**PREPARED REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**BROADBAND ACCELERATION CONFERENCE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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Good morning. Welcome to the FCC and to our Broadband Acceleration Conference.

To most people, a conference on accelerating infrastructure deployment through more efficient and effective regulation may not seem like the most exciting topic in the world.

Of course ... we're not most people. We love this stuff.

But you don't have to be a communications policy wonk to see that this is a really big deal.

There's growing recognition of something we have been working on since day one: building a robust 21<sup>st</sup> century communications infrastructure is essential to growing our economy, creating jobs, and our global competitiveness.

A couple of weeks ago, the President spoke about the need for innovation infrastructure investments in his State of the Union address, and in response to the President's remarks, the heads of the Chamber of Commerce and AFL-CIO issued a joint statement saying, "Whether it is building roads, bridges, [or] high-speed broadband ... these projects not only create jobs and demand for businesses, they are an investment in building the modern infrastructure our country needs to compete in a global economy."

Broadband – high-speed Internet – is the indispensable infrastructure of our digital economy. Unfortunately, too often there are unnecessary roadblocks in the way to delivering broadband to the American people. Today, I'm going to talk about what we've been doing at the FCC to these barriers, our plans to build on this progress through our Broadband Acceleration Initiative and what I want this conference to accomplish today.

Broadband has reshaped our economy and our lives more profoundly than any new technology since electricity.

Broadband enables businesses – big and small – to grow and hire. It is an unprecedented platform for collaboration and innovation – allowing inventors in their dorm rooms and garages to take big ideas, share them with the world, and build some of the powerhouse companies of the digital economy.

Broadband is also a key building block to our education, health care, and energy futures.

We're not where we need to be with broadband. Too many Americans don't have broadband, and international rankings consistently show us lagging other countries in broadband speeds, adoption and utilization.

We need more investment in our broadband infrastructure. When we talk about investing in broadband infrastructure, we're fundamentally talking about private investment.

Many billions of dollars in private investments, along with innovative technologies like DSL and cable modem service, have helped make wired broadband available to more than one hundred million American homes.

And thanks to revolutionary mobile devices, applications and services led by American companies, and billions more in private investments, the U.S. is well positioned in the global mobile revolution, with the opportunity to lead the world for years to come.

While we are looking to private industry to take the lead in building out our 21<sup>st</sup> century broadband infrastructure, government can serve as a catalyst for private investment.

There are three prongs to our broadband strategy.

First, unleashing spectrum – the invisible infrastructure that sustains our wireless communications.

Historically, we've seen that freeing spectrum for broadband has spurred massive mobile innovation and investment. That's why we're pursuing an aggressive mobile agenda, including voluntary incentive auctions.

Second, transforming the Universal Service Fund. The FCC's Universal Service Fund offers support that has enabled private companies to build out networks to communities where there was no economic case for service.

Earlier this week, we launched an effort to modernize USF to make sure we get the most bang for our USF buck.

The third prong is what we are here to talk about today – removing barriers to broadband build-out and speeding up processes to lower the cost of deployment.

One thing government at all levels can do is ensuring efficient, effective regulation. We need rules that serve legitimate public needs without erecting costly or unnecessary barriers.

The National Broadband Plan identified red tape as a significant obstacle to broadband deployment.

Overly burdensome rules and regulations can slow down deployment and raise costs. It also can limit businesses ability to invest in new technologies and hire new workers.

These costs can be significant. The National Broadband Plan estimated that the expense of obtaining permits and leasing pole attachments and rights-of-way can amount to 20% of the cost of fiber optic deployment.

Some of these costs are necessary. But we need to work to identify and remove unneeded regulation so we can reduce this figure.

One example of red tape that has delayed broadband infrastructure deployment is the tower siting process.

Before a wireless company can erect a new cell tower or put an antenna on an existing tower, they need to get approval from local authorities.

Companies have routinely had to wait for more than a year to get their applications approved – leaving workers and investment dollars sitting idle, and consumers stuck dealing with dropped calls and dead spots.

Other countries are taking these infrastructure issues seriously. We can't let unnecessary barriers to broadband expansion keep us from leading the global economy. That would be like losing the Daytona 500, because we forgot to take off the emergency brake.

The potential benefits of removing them are significant.

By some estimates, more streamlined processes for deploying fiber like “dig-once,” a recommendation in the National Broadband that has been championed by Representative Eshoo and Senators Warner and Klobuchar and calls for coordinating fiber builds with other infrastructure construction projects, could reduce deployment costs roughly 40 percent.

It has also been estimated that removing red tape and expediting approval processes could unleash \$11.5 billion in new broadband infrastructure investment over two years.

To be clear, not all rules are bad rules. Many are necessary to protect the interests of consumers, and businesses for that matter. We must avoid the trap of labeling all rules as inherently harmful. Our job is to remove barriers and ease the regulatory burden, where possible, while protecting the public interest.

The FCC has been working to remove barriers and spur broadband investment and innovation since I arrived.

On my first day in office, I said “pursuing policies that promote job creation, competition, innovation, and investment” would be one of the agencies primary goals.

One of my first actions as Chairman was to appoint a Special Counsel for FCC Reform, as part of an effort to improve agency operations and ensure this is an agency that works – one that is smart on economics and businesses and smart about how our actions impact the lives of consumers.

This past December 30<sup>th</sup>, we launched a comprehensive review of our current telecommunications regulations, seeking public comment on which regulations are no longer necessary or in the public interest.

We’ve launched a Data Innovation Initiative, not only to ensure our policies are fact-based and data-driven, but to eliminate unnecessary data collection. Just yesterday, the Commission voted to eliminate two data collections that are no longer useful. We’ve already taken action to modify or eliminate a number of burdensome rules.

We’ve established a shot-clock to speed the processing of requests for cell phone tower siting, addressing the problem I mentioned earlier.

We’ve initiated a proceeding to ease access to utility poles, which are critical to wired and wireless broadband deployment.

We’re loosening restrictions around mobile satellite spectrum so it can be used for broadband, in addition to giving license holders more flexibility to lease unused frequencies.

We’ve been working to enhance coordination with other federal agencies, as well as state and local associations, to streamline processes. We’ve also partnered with FDA to increase the predictability and speed of regulatory approvals for communications-related medical devices.

There’s one more thing we’re doing that really drives home the importance of today’s conference.

Late last year, we created a Technology Advisory Council, comprised of some of the country’s top business and technology leaders, and led by Tom Wheeler.

The Committee’s primary charge was to identify concrete things that could be done in the communications space to drive short term job creation.

The TAC came back with four ideas – one of which was removing barriers to speed broadband deployment. Why?

First, jobs would be created by the physical buildout of the networks. Look at 4G. Deploying the 40,000 towers needed for these next-generation mobile networks will create 53,000 jobs.

Second, broadband deployment has indirect economic benefits.

In his State of the Union, the President set a goal of bringing 4G service to 98 percent of Americans in the next 5 years, which would unleash a torrent of innovation and economic activity. We should not allow red tape to stand in the way of this deployment. The Technology Advisory Council has formed a working group on this very topic, and they will report next month to guide our further action.

Last month, the President issued an Executive Order calling on federal agencies to review their rules and regulations to remove barriers that are needlessly hurting businesses and our economy, and to ensure that our regulatory system “promot[es] economic growth, innovation, competitiveness, and job creation ... [and] use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends.”

The steps I have been taking at the FCC since my first day are in line with this executive order. As I informed senior staff last week, I expect the FCC to perform its responsibilities consistent with the principles in the executive order.

Today’s forum is consistent with all of these efforts to review our rules, keeping the ones that make sense, and changing the ones that don’t.

In that spirit, my hope is that this event will help us answer some critical questions:

- What are the main obstacles to broadband buildout and investment?
- What are success stories at the state and local level that can be replicated?
- What can the FCC do to accelerate buildout? More specifically, what can we do by rule, and what can be done with Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and private industry.
- I challenge you to identify five concrete things the FCC can do.

This meeting is an important part of the FCC’s Broadband Acceleration Initiative, what I’m very proud to announce today.

This April, the FCC will take up a notice of inquiry to examine federal, state and local public rights-of-way regulation and look for ways the FCC can contribute to improvements in this area.

At the same meeting, the Commission will consider final rules to ease access to utility poles.

I've also asked my staff to form an internal broadband acceleration task force to take the ideas generated today and consolidate them with we learn from our Technology Advisory Council and the Notice of Inquiry to craft practical, actionable ideas.

In particular, I have challenged the task force to develop a list of ways to overcome regulatory barriers in order to reduce the time required for broadband buildout by at least 20 percent.

As I'm sure you'd agree, the issues we are discussing today are critically important to our economy and global competitiveness. Thank you again for being a part of this important effort. Now, let's get to work.