



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 11, 2014

The Honorable Al Franken
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Franken:

Thank you for your letter urging the Federal Communications Commission to take further international and domestic steps to combat theft of mobile devices. As you correctly point out, this is a global concern, and to be truly effective the participation of foreign governments and carriers is essential. The Commission is working with the international community and all stakeholders to address this serious issue.

As you note, the Commission under my predecessor launched the PROTECTS Initiative as a first step to address this problem. Under that initiative, the United States wireless industry, in association with CTIA, began to participate in the GSM Association database of stolen phones. And you are also correct that one country working alone cannot combat and solve this problem. The more nations that participate, the more effective the database will become. The Commission will continue to call upon all countries to adopt the database and enact other measures to make the effort even more effective regionally and globally.

To that end, I appreciate your recognition of the bilateral agreement reached with Mexico in February 2012. The participation of Mexican operators in the GSMA database is a strong step in the right direction for improving the effectiveness of the database, especially given the cross-border trafficking of stolen phones, as you noted. The Commission currently is in discussions with the government of Columbia for bilateral agreements to further strengthen international efforts.

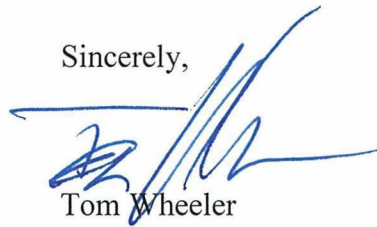
We have also advocated for regional support within the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), where the FCC's International Bureau routinely updates member states of U.S. activities in this area, and offers support and alliance to other member nations. CITEL's leadership in combating handset theft is vital as it encourages member nations to join together regionally to work with databases like the GSMA, and to consider appropriate regulatory measures as well as consumer outreach initiatives.

In addition, in July 2013, the Commission participated in a regional conference in Panama with Caribbean and Central American nations where the issue of stolen phones was part

of the larger agenda for the event. In October 2012, the Commission represented the U.S. at a regional forum in Bogota, Columbia, dedicated exclusively to discussion of stolen phone issues. The Commission also has held discussions with the Body of European Regulators and the United Kingdom regulator, OFCOM. We also have learned through our relationship with the Canadian Wireless Association that Canadian consumers purchasing a resold device have the ability to verify if the device's International Mobile Station Equipment Identity (IMEI) number has been registered as lost or stolen. This is a feature that we will consider for U.S. consumers as part of our ongoing follow-up of the PROTECTS Initiative.

I thank you again for raising the importance of international coordination in addressing this issue. The Commission will continue multinational efforts so that our consumers can be protected. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler