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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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June 21, 2017

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

Dear Chairman Pai:

The Federal Communications Commission's continuous work to marshal spectrum with the goal of improving broadband service yields enormous benefits to our country: economic growth, leadership in innovation, and the innumerable benefits of faster, better internet connectivity for all Americans. Beyond voice and data connectivity for individuals, wireless broadband powers telehealth, connected cars, smart communities, and supply chain management. As these demands increase, more spectrum resources are required.

While the U.S. has pushed ahead with efforts to free new spectrum at both low and high frequencies, we lag behind other countries in so-called "mid-band" spectrum—the range of frequencies between 3GHz and 7 GHz. Europe, China, Japan, and South Korea are all moving ahead to allocate hundreds of megahertz of mid-band spectrum, for licensed and unlicensed uses, in anticipation of both new Internet of Things applications as well as rising demand for mobile broadband that can be met with small cell deployments.

One way government can help augment the U.S.'s global leadership position is by looking for ways to encourage innovation and investment. To help achieve this goal, I introduced the MOBILE NOW Act to ensure that large swaths of wireless spectrum, including spectrum in the mid-band range, are made available for commercial use by the year 2020. For the U.S. to remain competitive as we see the rollout of the next generation gigabit wireless services, including 5G, more spectrum must be made available to keep pace with ever-increasing demand.

While I am hopeful that the Senate will pass the bipartisan MOBILE NOW Act in the very near future, I am pleased to hear that the Commission may be considering a new proceeding to identify new spectrum uses in a range of bands. As you look for ways to better utilize spectrum, I urge you to explore possible new allocations in the mid-band frequencies, perhaps including the 3.7 GHz and 6 GHz bands, and to begin a rulemaking proceeding focused on opening mid-band spectrum for both licensed and unlicensed networks.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing efforts to implement sensible, forward-looking spectrum policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Thune". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN THUNE
Chairman