

Media Contact:

Umair Javed 202-418-2400

Umair.Javed@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL CALLS FOR AN UPDATE ON WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO HALT THE SALE OF REAL-TIME LOCATION DATA

WASHINGTON, May 1, 2019: In May 2018, press reports revealed that U.S. phone companies were selling access to their customers' real-time location information to data aggregators. Then in January of this year, additional reporting revealed that hundreds of bounty hunters and related businesses had access to this highly sensitive data. This is a personal and national security issue that affects every American with a cell phone.

The Federal Communications Commission has said it is investigating, but—almost a year after this news first broke—the agency has not provided the public with any details. Nor has it taken any public action to ensure this activity has stopped.

To safeguard the privacy and safety of American consumers, Commissioner Rosenworcel sent letters to major phone companies today to confirm whether they have lived up to their commitments to end these location aggregation services. She also has asked phone companies to explain what steps they are taking to safeguard location data that previously was sold to third parties.

“The FCC needs to do more to protect the privacy and security of American consumers. It needs to do more to provide the public with basic information about what is happening with their real-time location information. That’s why I’m taking steps to ensure for the public that carriers are living up to their commitments to protect their customers’ most sensitive information, because this agency has failed to do so to date.”

—FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel

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Office of Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel: (202) 418-2400

Twitter: @JRosenworcel

www.fcc.gov/leadership/jessica-rosenworcel

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).