

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States**House of Representatives**

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May 9, 2019

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

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to examine closely the security of fifth-generation (5G) infrastructure and technology as part of the newly rechartered Communications Security, Reliability and Operability Council (CSRIC), CSRIC VII. The ubiquitous deployment of broadband, including next generation technologies such as 5G, is a priority as we work to ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable, and high-speed internet. As our U.S. network operators, from the largest to the smallest, gear up for significant infrastructure buildout for 5G and other advanced technologies, security should be a critical consideration and associated rules and regulations should be as clear as possible.

We understand the great promise of 5G and its potential to transform both communication networks and the global economy. Security is an important element of a strong network and should be addressed early in its design and deployment. Increasingly, critical equipment in our nation's communications infrastructure is manufactured outside of the United States, by companies controlled by foreign governments.¹ American intelligence and defense agencies have expressed concern that such companies could have an incentive or even obligation to use their network equipment to engage in espionage against U.S. interests and national security.²

¹ *Fifth-Generation (5G) Telecommunications Technologies: Issues for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, R45485 (Jan. 30, 2019); see also *Huawei Says It Would Never Hand Data to China's Government. Experts Say It Wouldn't Have a Choice*, CNBC (Mar. 4, 2019).

² *Id.*

Policymakers have called for a range of options to address these supply chain risks, including a provision in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act prohibiting Federal agencies from procuring equipment manufactured by named companies or associated with the government of certain countries.³ We believe that the FCC, too, is well-positioned to make important contributions on these important issues, including securing the supply chain for the equipment and software integral to communications networks.⁴ Congress has empowered the FCC to, among other things, ensure that the country's communications networks are being used for the national defense and promotion of safety and property.

Further, the agency has established in CSRIC an advisory body filled with experts from government, industry, and non-governmental organizations for the very purpose of studying the security of our communications systems. Although 5G security is apparently not an explicit focus of CSRIC VII, you have the opportunity to expand to additional issues as you so choose.⁵ While we are aware that one working group in CSRIC VI produced recommendations on supply chain risk management in December 2018, this rapidly evolving issue deserves a more explicit focus and attention alongside the many other important issues that body considers.

We believe that policymakers and industry alike would benefit greatly from a thoughtful, careful consideration of these important issues by the FCC and CSRIC. We hope you will consider this as you select members and determine the next steps for CSRIC VII.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman



Greg Walden
Ranking Member



Mike Doyle
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology



Robert E. Latta
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology

³ Pub. L. 115-232 (2018).

⁴ 47 U.S.C. § 151.

⁵ See FCC Announces the Rechartering of the Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council for a Seventh Two-Year Term and Solicits Nominations for Membership, Federal Communications Commission, Public Notice, DA 19-292 (Apr. 6, 2019).