REMARKS OF
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Good afternoon. It's great to join you for the 2022 5G Summit. I'm honored to be here with so many of my distinguished colleagues, including Senator Amy Klobuchar, Representative Brett Guthrie, and Brian Deese, the Director of the National Economic Council. And if you need proof that United States leadership in 5G is both a national and bipartisan priority, look no further than today's attendance list.

Plus, this summit is taking place at an auspicious time. Because it was today in 1894 that Guglielmo Marconi made wireless history when he first transmitted a radio wave three-quarters of a mile. He used equipment he developed at his family home about an hour southwest of Venice. This was, in many ways, the birth of wireless technology. But, as the story goes, the government was not impressed, and he had to leave home to develop financial support for his work. Arguably his boldest effort—developing a transatlantic broadcast—began only after he spent time in the United States in 1899.

I don't think that's an accident. I think the wonder we have for wireless innovation in the United States has a long history, and it runs deep. We prize being a global leader in spectrum technology. And we know that retaining our edge today requires a commitment to rolling out 5G networks. We are talking about networks that are up to 100 times faster; that will reduce latency by up to 80 percent; and that will handle up to 1,000 times more devices per square kilometer than today's 4G networks. In short, they have the power to transform so much in our day-to-day lives.

5G is already changing the way we connect. More than 60 percent of the smartphones shipped today are 5G devices. New 5G networks are boosting productivity and making industrial processes safer in factories, shipyards, and warehouses. With 5G fixed wireless we have fresh competition in the home broadband market, increasing the number of ways families can get online. Plus, using 5G technology in the power, transportation, and manufacturing sectors could lead to emissions savings that help put us on course to reach future climate targets.

This is exciting. It's a lot of progress in a very short amount of time. But the way I see it, we are only beginning to scratch the surface of next-generation wireless potential. That's because if we do this right, our phones will be the least interesting part of what we do with this technology in the future. But before we get there, we need to be mindful that we will never reach our full potential if these networks do not reach everyone, everywhere in this country.

At the FCC, we are determined to make progress. We are pursuing a 5G agenda that I believe can move the country forward, expand infrastructure investment, and pry open the doors of opportunity for all. And thanks to our work over the last year, we are making real strides toward building that 5G future.

So here it goes—five things we are doing right now to support the future of 5G.

First, we are investing in broadband and wireless coverage data. We are using the Broadband DATA Act to develop truly granular information about where service is and is not across the United States. We should have had this data long ago, but we are doing the second-best thing—we're building it now. Armed with this information, we are going to help close the digital divide, make smarter policies, and think big about how 5G service can reach everyone, everywhere. And here's how you can help. On June 30, we are opening our new system to collect coverage information from carriers—when that window opens, get us your data as quickly as possible.

Second, we are making wireless service more affordable. As you may know, the FCC launched the nation's largest-ever broadband affordability effort—now called the Affordable Connectivity Program. To date, it's responsible for connecting more than 11.5 million households nationwide to high-speed service. To those of you here who are participating, thank you—and keep at it.

Third, we are freeing up more spectrum—and especially mid-band spectrum—for 5G. In October, we kicked off an auction of 100 megahertz of prime mid-band airwaves in the 3.45 GHz band. Last week, we granted all of the licenses won in that auction. For those of you counting, that's more than 4,000 licenses for new wireless service. In addition, we are rolling right into our next mid-band spectrum auction, which will kick off in July. This auction of 2.5 GHz band airwaves will help extend 5G service beyond our most populated areas.

Fourth, on the equipment side, we are diversifying what goes into our 5G networks. This will increase security, drive down costs, and help build a bigger market for secure 5G equipment. Open and interoperable equipment is the future, and we are working to ensure that Open RAN technology is being built here and now.

Fifth, we are improving the way we coordinate with our federal partners. After all, our ability to be successful in our mission to connect everyone, everywhere is as much about finding partners as it is about finding spectrum. That's why earlier this month I announced a new Spectrum Coordination Initiative with Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

That's a lot of activity. But we are not stopping now. Earlier today you heard the Director of the National Economic Council, Brian Deese, talk about the growing challenge of spectrum scarcity and the need for a national spectrum plan. I agree. We need to replenish the spectrum pipeline for new commercial innovation if we want to continue to lead the world in wireless. We also need to be creative. I think that creativity is in our national DNA. Let's speculate that's what Marconi saw here, too. Because remember that spectrum auctions, incentive auctions, unlicensed authorization, and dynamic spectrum access systems all got their start in the United States. We've turned spectrum scarcity into abundance before. We can do it again.

I started with five things we are doing for 5G, and now I am going to close with five ideas about what we can do next. These ideas will require working together—and with Congress—to update allocation processes, explore new incentives, leverage new technologies, and build new infrastructure. So here we go.

First, we should provide certainty around near-term spectrum opportunities. The Spectrum Innovation Act would require the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Commission to identify at least 200 megahertz of spectrum in the 3.1-3.45 GHz band for auction. This legislation would provide much needed certainty about the near-term availability of mid-band spectrum to support next-generation wireless networks, because it has the mix of propagation and capacity that can help close the digital divide.

Second, we should explore updating the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act to make it a more effective tool for repurposing spectrum. Today, this law encourages federal users to clear spectrum by establishing a Spectrum Relocation Fund. The fund reimburses federal agencies operating on airwaves that have been reallocated for commercial use. So far, so good.

But I think we can do more with the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act. For starters, we could make sure that federal users relocating have a wider range of options. That means creating opportunities for federal agencies to upgrade their capabilities when they relocate to new spectrum. We could also consider payments of relocation funds to federal users in adjacent spectrum who may need to make changes when airwaves are repurposed. This could help avoid spectrum disputes and smooth the way for the reallocation of airwaves. In addition, we could revisit the statutory requirement for FCC auctions to raise 110 percent of federal users' estimated relocation costs. As we've learned in recent auctions, this requirement really limits the Commission's ability to design creative spectrum auctions and take advantage of new innovations in spectrum policy, like dynamic sharing models. Finally, we could explore if a model similar to this law could help make more efficient use of commercial airwaves.

Third, we should explore receiver performance. Historically, our discussions about spectrum efficiency have been a one-way effort. They have focused almost exclusively on transmitters. But efficient use of our airwaves is a two-way effort. And low-quality receivers can make it harder to introduce new services in the same or nearby frequencies. That is why last month the Commission launched a new inquiry on receiver performance. It asks about incentives, guidelines, regulatory requirements, and procurement practices that could help create a more transparent and predictable radiofrequency environment for all users. It's time to consider these concepts because, if we get them right, we will have more airwaves available for new and innovative services.

Fourth, we should consider the broader use of incentives. If we want a robust and reliable spectrum pipeline, we need to make sure that federal authorities see gain—and not just loss—when their airwaves are reallocated for new commercial use. To do this, we could explore a series of incentives to serve as a catalyst for freeing up more spectrum for commercial markets. We could begin by developing a spectrum currency. With a uniform system of valuation for

federal spectrum assignments, we could explore the development of incentives for efficiency and better understand the opportunity cost of federal use. This would facilitate a supply of spectrum for new commercial uses through a policy based on carrots, rather than sticks.

Fifth and finally, we should use this opportunity to solve our most pressing communications challenges. We can put our public airwaves to broader public purpose in any spectrum auction reauthorization. How? We can work with Congress to use the billions of dollars that FCC spectrum auctions raise to build the public infrastructure this country needs. And we could start with using future auction revenues to fund the nation's transition to next-generation 911. It would benefit public safety nationwide—and every one of us who dials 911 when the unthinkable occurs. In short, we can have an updated public emergency calling system that is built for the digital age, and we can use public airwaves to do it.

So there you have it. Five things we are doing for 5G and five ideas about what could come next. This is challenging. It won't all be easy. As Marconi himself learned, not every bold idea yields immediate rewards. But thinking big and then making it happen is how we have led the world in wireless. Like I said up front, we've done it before, and we can do it again. I believe it. In fact, I believe working together we can make progress and build a brighter wireless future.

Thank you.