

**REMARKS OF
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2022 NTIA SPECTRUM POLICY SYMPOSIUM
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Good morning! Thank you to Secretary Raimondo and Assistant Secretary Davidson for having me here today at the NTIA Spectrum Policy Symposium.

This is the fifth annual gathering of this symposium. Five years ago, we wouldn't have marveled that we could come together to talk wireless policy in person. But today it's something to celebrate, and I'm glad we're all here.

Five years ago, the Federal Communications Commission was finishing up the broadcast spectrum incentive auction. Remember that? It was the world's first ever double-sided incentive auction designed to use market mechanisms to repurpose old airwaves for new commercial uses. It was a big deal. It was also messy. Because it was complicated! Repurposing spectrum is not for the faint of heart. The tools we have to do it are constrained by law, limited by physics, and the relocation of existing users can be challenging.

And yet . . . we forge on. Because when we look back on the last five years, or better yet the last ten, what we see is that wireless technology is remaking our world. The phones that are in our palms, pockets, and purses have forever changed the way we connect. Wireless technology supports so much that is growing in our economy and may contribute as much as \$1.5 trillion to our Gross Domestic Product over the next decade.

When you look back you also see very clearly that the United States has long been a global leader in spectrum policy. When the going gets tough, we get creative. You see it with the broadcast incentive auction five years ago. If you roll back further, you see it when we became the first to use auctions to modernize the distribution of licensed airwaves. You also see it in the way we pioneered the use of unlicensed spectrum—which supports the airwaves we know and use every day as Wi-Fi.

So what comes next? How do we build on this storied history? I think the next chapter is going to require us to think anew. We can embrace what has worked before, but we also need to get creative again. Because the future will be different than the past. The focus on phones will give way to connectivity that touches everything in the economy. In fact, if we do this right, our phones will be the least interesting part of our wireless future. Because we are on the cusp of new forms of connectivity that will boost productivity and make industrial processes safer in factories, shipyards, and warehouses. We will see fresh competition in the delivery of household broadband, increasing the number of ways families get online. Plus, using next generation wireless technology in the power, transportation, and manufacturing sectors could lead to emissions savings that could help put us on course to reach future climate targets.

It's exciting. And it's going to require a reset in the way we think about the opportunities in our airwaves. But tradition-bound Washington is not always quick to change. I know, I'm the first woman to permanently lead the FCC in 87 years.

So I'm making up for lost time. When I took the reins at the agency, we made a fast pivot to focus on mid-band airwaves. This is the spectrum that has the mix of coverage and capacity that is essential for the widespread deployment of 5G service. So we held auctions in the 3.45 and 2.5 GHz bands—with the latter concluding just last month.

I also made it a priority to improve the way we coordinate with our federal counterparts. Here a reset was in order because our ability to be successful in our mission to connect everyone, everywhere is as much about finding partners as it is about finding spectrum. The good news is that the FCC has terrific partners in Secretary Raimondo and Assistant Secretary Davidson. So we memorialized that fact in a new Spectrum Coordination Initiative earlier this year.

To start, we reinstated high level meetings between the FCC and NTIA. We also updated the Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies—for the first time in nearly two decades. And, as you heard Secretary Raimondo say just a few minutes ago, we are working together on a national spectrum strategy.

But process alone is not progress. We need to build what comes next. So here are three ideas. Think of them as three near-term efforts to help us continue to reset spectrum policy in the United States so we continue to lead the world in wireless.

First, we need to extend the FCC's auction authority—and get creative when we do. This is important. The FCC has had the authority to hold spectrum auctions for nearly three decades. It's been a powerful engine for wireless innovation and economic growth. In fact, using this authority the FCC has held 100 auctions and raised more than \$233 billion in revenue. This is a big reason why our wireless economy has led the world.

This is leadership worth preserving. To do so, we will need Congress to extend the agency's spectrum auction authority. It expires with the end of the fiscal year. That's September 30—and it's right around the corner. I know there is an effort to fix this in a continuing resolution that would extend federal appropriations. This is a good thing. It's also the starting point for broader discussion about what a multi-year extension looks like.

When we have that discussion, let's talk about bands, exclusive use, shared use, licensed opportunities, unlicensed opportunities, you name it. But we should also talk about how funds raised from the auction of our public airwaves should be directed for public purpose. Because with the reauthorization of auction authority we have a golden opportunity to use the billions of dollars that FCC spectrum auctions raise to build the public infrastructure this country needs. And Congress could start with using future auction revenues to fund the nation's transition to next-generation 911. This creative approach has the support of first responders across the country. Because 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.

Second, we need more mid-band spectrum in the pipeline—sooner rather than later.

While Congress works on auction reauthorization, there is no rest for the weary. We need to keep up our efforts to find more airwaves to fuel the mid-band spectrum pipeline, following our successful auctions of the 3.45 and 2.5 GHz bands. Like I said at the start, these are the airwaves that are essential for 5G services to reach everyone, everywhere. But they can take us even farther. In fact, at Mobile World Congress this year, I announced that in the United States we were already thinking about mid-band spectrum to support 6G service. I know, I know—it's still early days. But it's not too early to set our sights on bands with promise that can help lead us into the future, like airwaves in the 7-16 GHz range.

On this front, I am pleased to announce that we are making progress and moving this mid-band effort forward. Earlier this month I shared a draft Notice of Inquiry with NTIA that would explore repurposing spectrum in the 12.7 -13.25 GHz band for next-generation wireless technologies. That could be up to 550 megahertz of new mid-band spectrum. When this coordination is complete, I will share the notice with my colleagues for consideration at our October agenda meeting.

Third, we need to consider receiver performance—to have more spectrum security in the future. So much in spectrum policy focuses on airwaves and auctions, distribution and deployment. And when we talk about spectrum efficiency, it has typically been a one-way effort. We focus on transmitters. But efficient use of our airwaves is a two-way street. And receivers matter. But when low-quality or imprecise receivers are widely deployed, they can make it harder to introduce new services in the same or nearby frequencies. That has consequences that are broader than just spectrum policy. Because this equipment can degrade the spectrum environment for all of us by limiting its economic potential and innovative possibilities. This is why the FCC recently launched a Notice of 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 services.

So there you have it. Three ideas to push us forward at the fifth annual spectrum symposium held by our colleagues at NTIA. They are all tied to one essential principle—the belief that in the United States we have led the world in wireless because we are hardwired to seek out the creative possibilities of the future. As we develop what comes next in spectrum policy, let's keep that front of mind. I know I will. Thank you.