Responses to Written Questions Submitted by Chairman Roger F. Wicker to Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel

Question 1. Senator Johnson asked the panel about the interagency coordination problems regarding the U.S. position on interference in the 24 GHz band. In response you stated, "I can be a little less diplomatic. I have not been in the meetings that the chairman has referred to, but I can tell you this; the situation we have is embarrassing. We have to resolve these issues before we put the spectrum to market in an auction." Did you vote to adopt the final procedures for Auction 102 on August 3, 2018?

Response. Yes.

Question 2. When I asked Commissioner Starks if he was satisfied with the Commission's analysis regarding spectrum interference Commissioner Starks stated, "The last thing that I would say is that I do have confidence in the Office of Engineering and Technology at the FCC, but I haven't personally studied this issue." Do you share Commissioner Starks' confidence in the Office of Engineering and Technology at the FCC?

Response. Yes.

Responses to Written Questions Submitted by Senator Todd Young to Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel

Question. Currently, millions of rural Americans lack access to fixed high-speed broadband, which in today's economy is perceived as basic infrastructure. In the FCC's 2019 Broadband Deployment Report, the FCC concluded that broadband is being deployed to all Americans, including rural Americans, in a timely fashion. The report also asserted that FCC policies are promoting investments and removing burdensome barriers.

With that said, according to a preliminary analysis, which was released on Monday by USTelecom, U.S. broadband provider investments increased by approximately $3 billion to total roughly $75 billion in 2018.

Given the ongoing growth in private investments, what are the FCC's priorities moving forward to ensure U.S. broadband providers have the resources they need in the free market for continued investments in rural America? Additionally, how will the FCC continue to update its mapping to provide an accurate account of high-speed service?

Response. Broadband is the essential infrastructure of the digital age. It supports all aspects of modern commercial and civic life. As you suggest, there are many communications companies—large and small—that have done significant work to deploy high-speed service across the country. However, there remain too many places, especially in rural communities, where broadband is unavailable.

In a report released this year, the FCC announced that 21.3 million Americans lack access to broadband, including 16.8 million in rural areas. That's unacceptable.

What is worse, however, is that these numbers likely overstate the reach of high-speed service across the country. That's because there are serious problems with the data the FCC uses to assess the state of broadband deployment. The methodology used to determine the presence of service is both overbroad and imprecise. Under the present data collection system used by the FCC, if a service provider claims that they serve a single customer in a census block, the agency assumes that there is service throughout the census block. As a result, the FCC's claim that there are only 21.3 million people in the United States without access to broadband is just not credible. As further evidence, consider that another recent analysis reported in the New York Times that concluded that as many as 162 million people across the country do not use internet service at broadband speeds.

Unfortunately, the inaccurate data used in the FCC's broadband report earlier this year is the same data that is used to populate the agency's broadband maps. These maps, as you may know, have been criticized—by consumers, carriers, and members of Congress—for failing to provide an accurate picture of where broadband is and is not across the country.

I believe we cannot manage what we do not measure. If we lack the data needed to develop accurate maps, we will not be able to target policy solutions effectively. The FCC distributes

billions of dollars each year to help accelerate the build out of broadband to connect all of our communities. These funds are an especially critical part of ensuring the deployment of high-speed service in rural communities. But it's fundamentally irresponsible for the FCC to continue to send these dollars out without having a truly accurate picture of where those resources should go.

Going forward, the FCC must make it a top priority to update its maps and improve the accuracy of the information it collects. In doing so, I think the agency should mobilize all resources it has at its disposal. In other words, instead of limiting our efforts to information collected from the carriers, the FCC should explore other ways of refining and improving our broadband data. This should include a process for stakeholders to challenge data submitted to the agency. In addition, the FCC should enlist the assistance of the Universal Service Administrative Company and the agency's own field offices around the country to perform spot checks on data submitted to the agency. It also should incorporate crowdsourcing. So many Americans have stories to tell about where service is lacking in their communities. We need to develop ways to incorporate what they know and their desire to help refine our data—by developing a way for the public to participate in the improvement of our maps.