

Prepared Statement of David J. Redl, Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, U.S. Department of Commerce

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for scheduling this hearing. My name is David Redl and I am honored to be the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and the Administrator of NTIA.

I'd like to start by thanking President Trump and Secretary Ross for the honor of this nomination. The communications and information sectors are the backbone of modern commerce and as principal advisor to the President on telecommunications, NTIA plays an integral role in preserving our nation's leadership in these sectors. Whether it's broadband deployment, the digital economy, or managing our government spectrum resources, NTIA is at the forefront of preserving and advancing our information economy.

For the past six years, I have had the privilege of working as a member of the professional staff of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Under the leadership of Chairmen Fred Upton and Greg Walden, I dedicated much of my time on Capitol Hill to working closely with my colleagues, both Republican and Democratic, on a number of telecommunications issues, among them improving the availability and use of spectrum.

Spectrum is the invisible infrastructure of our digital economy, and it enables our increasingly mobile society. Despite the good work that has been done to make more spectrum available, demand continues to grow as smart cities, connected cars, and 5G wireless technologies become closer to widespread deployment. Among NTIA's responsibilities is management of the federal government spectrum. Improving the performance of government spectrum systems, providing incentives for government agencies to make better use of spectrum, and promoting spectrum research and development have been critical to the digital economy and will continue to be important for NTIA. The recent changes made by Congress to the Spectrum Relocation Fund are already driving federal agencies to reach for new efficiencies, but the work on this front is far from over. If confirmed, I will work to continue to improve government spectrum efficiency and make additional spectrum available to fuel our nation's licensed and unlicensed wireless needs.

In addition to working to expand the spectrum available for broadband, NTIA plays a critical role in working to ensure no American is left out of our digital society. The unfortunate reality is that there continue to be Americans for whom access to basic broadband is lacking, particularly in rural areas. Recently, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao testified before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works that the Trump Administration's infrastructure initiative will include broadband infrastructure. As the President's principal advisor on communications policy, NTIA will play a role in developing the Administration's approach. And rightly so. The staff of NTIA have decades of experience in what works – and what doesn't – when it comes to promoting private sector investment in broadband networks. If confirmed, I will work with the talented professionals at NTIA to drive investment in rural America to bring the economic opportunity of broadband to the unserved parts of our country.

Finally, I'd like to discuss the important work that NTIA does to promote the U.S. digital economy. That work takes many forms. NTIA is the United States' representative on the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' Government Advisory Committee where it works to ensure the Internet remains an engine for global communication and commerce; NTIA engages industry and the public in multistakeholder groups to address issues of privacy and the Internet of Things; and, NTIA works to protect the Internet and Internet users through its policy work on cybersecurity.

This work is critical to preserving the Internet as an engine of free speech and free-market commerce, and to protecting Americans online. The multistakeholder process NTIA has employed holds the potential to bring a fresh approach to communications policy challenges and new levels of engagement with the Internet community. This same approach can also further NTIA's work on cybersecurity. The President's recent Executive Order on the topic recognizes the Department of Commerce's role in cybersecurity and NTIA's approach has the potential to provide a new voice to the commercial Internet and its users in this important discussion.

The NTIA's approach to policy, engagement, and its role as the President's "principal adviser on telecommunications policies pertaining to the Nation's economic and technological advancement," make NTIA uniquely qualified to tackle the communications challenges of the twenty-first century. If confirmed, I will work with the men and women of the NTIA to expand broadband availability, preserve the Internet as a driver for economic growth, promote the U.S. digital economy, and to drive investment in the broadband networks that comprise the global Internet.

Again, I thank President Trump and Secretary Ross for the honor of this nomination and I look forward to answering any questions for the Committee.