

Written Statement of

Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

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Introduction

Chairman Luján, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Thune, Ranking Member Wicker and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today at this historic moment for NTIA.

By law, NTIA serves as the President's advisor on telecommunications and information policy. Today NTIA's programs and policymaking are expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, promoting the use of spectrum by all users, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth.

I am honored and humbled to lead NTIA at this pivotal moment. We have been given a historic opportunity—thanks to bipartisan support from Congress—to close the digital divide, create good-paying jobs, promote equity and fairness, and enhance American competitiveness.

NTIA has many responsibilities, but today I will highlight our priorities and update you on the progress we've made since I was confirmed by this chamber in January.

Priority number one is closing the digital divide. Gaps in broadband availability and in adoption, even where the infrastructure is available, mean gaps in opportunity: fewer opportunities to learn and work from home, remotely visit doctors, or stay connected with family and friends. Achieving an equitable future means ensuring that homes and businesses have high-quality connections at affordable prices, and the means to use them.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$65 billion to help deliver affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet to every American and help close the digital divide. NTIA was allocated \$48.2 billion of that total.

To achieve these goals, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created or expanded four programs at NTIA. The \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program will fund infrastructure buildouts needed to connect every American to reliable, high-speed, affordable Internet. The law also provides NTIA with \$2.75 billion for a program to address digital inclusion and equity, and \$1 billion for a program to expand middle mile infrastructure. Our

active Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program received an additional \$2 billion to help further our efforts with tribal communities.

I am pleased to report that on May 13th—ahead of our statutory deadlines—NTIA announced \$45 billion in funding by issuing the first Notices of Funding Opportunity for three of these programs: the Broadband, Equity Access, and Deployment Program, the Ensuring Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program, and the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program. In drafting the Notices of Funding Opportunity, NTIA faithfully implemented the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. NTIA reviewed and incorporated feedback from the broad array of stakeholders who commented in response to our Request for Comment, as well as input that we received from Members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, and other elected officials throughout the country who are all working close the digital divide. I am even more pleased to report that, as of this week, 36 states and territories across the country have submitted letters of intent to participate in the Broadband, Equity Access, and Deployment program.

In addition to these Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs, NTIA is working to implement the separate \$1.5 billion in broadband grant funding included as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. We have awarded 13 grants totaling more than \$277 million as part of the Broadband Infrastructure Program and have made another 33 awards for \$83 million from the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. On a rolling basis this summer, we expect to announce a total of over \$1 billion in Tribal broadband and Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program awards.

NTIA's second focus area is ensuring access to spectrum. NTIA serves a critical role in ensuring the most effective and efficient use of this scarce Federal resource across the Federal government. That includes meeting critical Federal mission needs while coordinating with the Federal Communications Commission to support advanced wireless technologies, so we can realize the promise of next generation services and connected devices. As I stated during my confirmation hearing, I am committed to working toward a coordinated, national approach to spectrum use, promoting evidence-based approaches to spectrum allocation, and leaning on innovative new technology to ensure we meet current and future demands.

We have made great progress already on this front. In February, one of my first acts as Assistant Secretary was establishing the Spectrum Coordination Initiative in conjunction with FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel. The Initiative's purpose is to improve coordination on spectrum management between our agencies, including regular high-level meetings and renewed efforts to develop a National Spectrum Strategy. At our inaugural meeting in March, we launched a joint task force for the purposes of updating our interagency Memorandum of Understanding for the first time in 20 years. I am pleased with our progress to date. We continue to meet monthly to ensure that spectrum policy decisions foster economic growth, ensure our national and homeland security, maintain U.S. global leadership, and advance other vital U.S. needs.

Finally, NTIA supports secure, private, free and open communications around the world. We are working to bolster our nation's cybersecurity, strengthen public safety communications, protect privacy, and advocate for America's vision of free and open communications. We are playing a leading role in the U.S. government's efforts to increase market competitiveness and

enhance supplier diversity for secure 5G infrastructure, and working to accelerate the adoption of Open RAN technologies in the United States and globally. I also want to thank you for your work to advance the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which would provide \$1.5 billion in funding for the NTIA-administered Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund.

NTIA is also leading efforts to enhance public safety communications and Next Generation 911, as well as supporting the FirstNet Authority for our nation's first responders.

And we are working to ensure that our global communications systems remain a positive force offering access to information, connection with community, and economic opportunity. That includes support for the election of Doreen Bogdan-Martin to Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union as a key U.S. government priority.

All of these are ambitious goals. Given technology's growing role in our lives, these priorities are about far more than communications policy. They are about creating new jobs for Americans. They are about public safety and national security. They are about improving equity here at home. They are about competing on the global stage.

This is an exciting and historic moment for NTIA. I look forward to working with this Subcommittee to execute our mission and deliver on these promises to all Americans.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.