

April 16, 2020

Senator Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Greg Walden
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden,

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of why Americans need better broadband access. Millions of Americans rely on the internet for remote work, education and/or digital health. As we fight the pandemic, we can act to ensure our broadband infrastructure can handle this and future challenges. Congress can help by enacting policies that reduce regulatory barriers to 5G deployment and provide greater access to spectrum.

CTA recently published research, "[COVID-19 Impact Study: Use of Technology at Home](#)," examining the increase in Americans' use of technology including online ordering and contactless delivery, social media and online health and fitness tools. Nearly half of U.S. consumers are using online streaming video more often; a quarter of consumers are buying non-food items online; and in March, more than a third of U.S. households bought new technology to help them adjust to life during the pandemic.

Among the consumer and economic benefits of 5G, we see many benefits from the new and advanced telehealth capabilities and applications. With social distancing and stay-at-home requirements in place, we need digital health and telehealth capabilities. CTA and its member companies recently launched TechHealthDirectory.com to help fight the pandemic by sharing information on American resources for virtual care and home health and wellness. We want to

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help our nation use tech innovations to fight the pandemic, but these innovations rely on a robust broadband infrastructure with ready access to spectrum.

In 2018, CTA supported the Streamlining The Rapid Evolution And Modernization of Leading-edge Infrastructure Necessary to Enhance Small Cell Deployment (the STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment) Act, bipartisan legislation to modernize wireless infrastructure regulation for next generation 5G wireless networks. CTA has also consistently supported legislation to make more spectrum available for commercial use, including the Advancing Innovation and Reinvigorating Widespread Access to Viable Electromagnetic Spectrum (AIRWAVES) Act and the Repack Airwaves Yielding Better Access for Users of Modern Services (RAY BAUM'S) Act of 2018. As Congress and the administration consider future ways to address the pandemic, we encourage our leaders to include certain provisions in order to advance 5G:

- Ensure a reasonable process and timelines by codifying the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) actions in its September 26, 2018 Declaratory Ruling and Report and Order on "Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment."
 - Congress should limit the fees state and local governments can charge for small cell deployments. Lawmakers should also clarify the extent to which states and localities can impose non-fee requirements on wireless infrastructure, such as aesthetic rules.
- Encourage the spectrum allocation needed to facilitate 5G and associated innovations.
 - Congress should continue working with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and FCC to identify spectrum for commercial use. Based on NTIA's August 2019 spectrum repurposing report, 7.25 gigahertz of spectrum is being studied for licensed 5G networks. The FCC is also considering making 1200 megahertz of spectrum available for unlicensed use.
 - Congress should urge federal users to make efficient use of their spectrum holdings. FCC Commissioner Michael O'Rielly recently wrote President Trump to stress the urgent need to repurpose spectrum for commercial use. We echo those sentiments.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the critical role technology plays in delivering solutions for remote work, education and digital health. Thanks to recent innovations, we are better equipped to handle public health emergencies and contain the spread of diseases. To continue American leadership, we need a robust broadband infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Gary Shapiro
President & CEO