

Aug. 1, 2022

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U.S. Senate Commerce Committee
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subcommittee Chairman Senator Ben Ray Lujan
U.S. Senate Commerce Committee
498 Russell Senate Office Building
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Ranking Member Roger Wicker
U.S. Senate Commerce Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
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Ranking Member John Thune
U.S. Senate Commerce Committee
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We respectfully write to express our support for a short-term extension of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) spectrum auction authority by the Senate. As seen in the House-passed *Extending America's Spectrum Auction Leadership Act of 2022* (H.R. 7624), we support the extension of the FCC's authority to auction and license spectrum, **preventing its lapse on September 30, 2022**. Unless the Senate acts now, the FCC's authority to allocate spectrum is at risk.

Without an extension, after the July 2022 auction of the 2.5 GHz band, the U.S. spectrum pipeline essentially runs dry—that same pipeline has allowed the U.S. to advance wireless innovation and unlock unprecedented consumer value, bringing accessible, affordable, and reliable connectivity to underserved and unserved communities across America.

Preserving the FCC's ability to auction spectrum is critical to facilitate the deployment of nationwide 5G and future technologies, to spur competition and innovation, and bring essential connectivity to all Americans. The allocation of more mid-band spectrum will continue to foster an environment where 5G's potential will be unleashed to bring social, economic, and job creation benefits to all communities. Every advantage we experience with 5G in the U.S.—expanding digital inclusion, improvements in public safety, health care, and access—depends on the availability of auctioned spectrum.

Congress has a key role to play—it has authorized the FCC to auction spectrum five times since its inception in 1993. It has always mandated specific auctions and improvements to the spectrum allocation process in extending authority, and this case should be no different. We have seen the demand for wireless services continue to increase, especially amongst communities of color, and any delay in the allocation and availability of critical bands will hinder deployment, innovation, and access to technology—impacting the communities we seek to serve.

Spectrum auctions build a better America, raising over \$230 billion in revenue—including over \$100 billion in just the last year. A pipeline of future auctions can ensure funding for additional congressional priorities including closing the digital divide, increasing access, and rural wireless deployment. As a recent MMTC report highlighted, “connecting families to a high-speed internet connects them to vastly improved quality of life, including economic empowerment, improved healthcare outcomes for chronic illnesses, broader opportunities for advanced education, safer workplaces, and much more.”

Congress cannot allow the FCC's auction authority to lapse. A short-term extension preserves the FCC's ability to auction spectrum while giving Congress sufficient time to develop an efficient spectrum plan with input from relevant stakeholders, providing enough time to complete already existing auctions,

identifying future uses for spectrum bands, and enabling Congress to effectively use proceeds of future auctions.

We respectfully urge the Senate to consider and pass a short-term extension of the FCC's spectrum auction authority to ensure American wireless communications networks and services continue to bring innovation, opportunity, and access to all Americans.

Respectfully,

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