



February 4, 2020

Re: The Importance of a Quick C-Band Auction to America's 5G Future

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C., 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Making more spectrum available has been an important part of your agenda at the FCC, as well it should, and now is the time for action on C-band spectrum.

While the U.S. has many advantages in the must-win global race to 5G, it lacks sufficient mid-band spectrum, particularly the C-band, the frequencies which 23 nations have already prioritized for 5G and where standards for 5G devices will be harmonized globally. The FCC must act quickly to auction C-band spectrum for 5G deployment.

We believe that auctioning the C-band spectrum is the most pressing issue facing the FCC today, and one that is critical to America's 5G future. It should be the Commission's top priority for the February Open Meeting.

Enabling rapid, widespread deployment of 5G wireless in urban and rural areas is critical to maintain America's economic well-being, national defense, and global competitiveness. We do not underestimate the stakes; China continues to advance on 5G and could surpass the U.S. in artificial intelligence, augmented reality, quantum computing, and robotics. The C-band is where 5G innovation in these technologies will happen, and if the U.S. does not provision this spectrum as quickly as possible in 2020, it will lose the opportunity to compete with China – a potentially devastating but avoidable outcome.

There is no time to waste. Delaying the start of the complicated process of spectrum reallocation will only suit China's interests. Conducting such a complex an auction under a compressed timeframe will require the FCC's full attention. We would like to see you lead on the C-band with the same speed, vigor and principle you have brought to other items throughout your productive tenure at the FCC.

As FCC Commissioner Michael O'Rielly recently stated, delaying the C-band public auction poses a serious national security risk as well. China has already pledged to make its the C-band spectrum available for their wireless systems, giving them an alarming advantage in the development of the high-tech weaponry that is going to be essential to national defense in the coming years.

The Commission must do everything it can to minimize obstacles that could slow the C-band auction, and it is vital that American wireless providers continue building 5G networks.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you on this critical matter to ensure that a C-band public auction begins in earnest this year.

Sincerely,

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Mark Jamison, Visiting Scholar*
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Grover Norquist, President
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*Views expressed reflect the scholars' positions; the American Enterprise Institute takes not policy positions.