

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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[www.science.house.gov](http://www.science.house.gov)

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Neil Jacobs  
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction and  
Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Acting Administrator Jacobs,

As the Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, we are writing to request that you immediately release any scientific studies conducted by NOAA on the impacts of 5G spectrum use in the 24.25-25.25 GHz band on Earth exploration-satellite service (passive).

We are very concerned about potential interference and loss of specific portions of the electromagnetic spectrum that are used by microwave sensors on NOAA's Earth observing satellites by 5G spectrum use. These microwave sensors measure water vapor, which is essential to predictions of rainfall, drought, hurricanes, and nearly every other type of weather prediction. We issued letters to the Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on March 13<sup>th</sup> expressing these concerns<sup>1</sup> and called for the FCC to delay the auction of 5G spectrum until NOAA, NASA and the DOD have been adequately consulted. But the FCC proceeded to launch the auction the following day.

While we strongly support advancing America's telecommunications infrastructure, timely and accurate weather prediction capabilities are a matter of public safety. The FCC has proposed a noise threshold of -20 dBW for operating 5G at the 24.25-25.25 GHz band. However, they have not made public a scientific basis for this recommendation. As NOAA is the leading civilian federal agency in weather research, we seek any information the Administration has prepared in support of a scientifically-based recommendation for a noise threshold that would prevent interference with weather data and predictions.

Time is of the essence to examine all relevant information on this matter. The United States and other members of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) PCC.II working group are convening on April 8<sup>th</sup> in Monterrey, Mexico to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://science.house.gov/letters-to-fcc-chairman-and-commissioners-are-requesting-the-delay-of-5g-spectrum-auction>

prepare a regional position on a noise threshold for future 5G spectrum use. It is critical that the United States has made all relevant technical information about the noise threshold for the 24.25-25.25 GHz band available in advance of this meeting. The findings of the parties at CITELE will be used to inform a global noise threshold standard at the World Radiocommunication Conference meeting in October of 2019 (WRC-19).

We respectfully request that NOAA provide the Committee with copies of any draft or final studies prepared by NOAA that inform the potential effects of the FCC's ongoing 24 GHz spectrum auction on passive water vapor sensors. Please include any analysis of how the stringency of noise thresholds for the 24.25-25.25 GHz band factors in to potential interference with weather-related radio frequency bands.

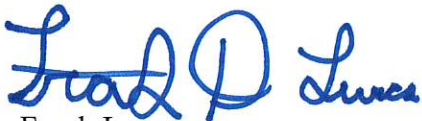
Under the "special oversight" clause of Rule X of the U.S. House of Representatives, the "Committee on Science, Space, and Technology shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development."<sup>2</sup>

Please ensure that these documents are produced in a searchable electronic format and delivered by 5:00 pm on Friday April 5, 2019. If you have any questions or concerns about this request please contact Lauren Linsmayer on the Majority Staff of the Science Committee at (202) 225-6375.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology



Frank Lucas  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

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<sup>2</sup> Rule X, Organization of Committees, U.S. House of Representatives, accessed here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/HMAN-115/xml/HMAN-115-pg441.xml>