

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Donna Edwards
Avoiding the Spectrum Crunch: Growing the Wireless Economy through Innovation
April 18, 2012

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on ways to address the impending spectrum crunch. And thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

The U.S. has long been a leader in information and communication technologies, with the majority of the top firms being American companies. However, in a sector where it is all about the next big innovation, we can't afford to rest on our past accomplishments. Wireless broadband is expected to trigger the next wave of innovation and holds enormous potential to create high-quality jobs and economic growth. For example, one estimate shows that providing an additional 300 megahertz of spectrum to wireless broadband uses will generate 300,000 new jobs and \$230 billion in GDP within five years.

Advances in wireless technologies also hold the promise to benefit the public. For example, the use of mobile technologies for patient monitoring is expected to vastly improve the quality of patient care and reduce healthcare costs by as much as \$6 billion by 2014.

Smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices are already a part of our everyday lives. Consumers and businesses have learned to expect access to information at anytime from anywhere. This demand has resulted in the rapid growth of wireless data flowing across our networks. In fact, the amount of "wireless traffic" has increased by more than 100 percent in the last year alone and that demand is expected to rise by a factor of 20 by 2015. The only way to accommodate this growing demand is to increase the amount of spectrum available for wireless services.

The incentive auctions authorized in the *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012* will help to free up some of this valuable spectrum. However, if the U.S. wants to continue to lead the "wireless revolution," then we have to make more efficient use of our spectrum.

Advances in research and development are central to the goal of freeing up spectrum for wireless broadband. Spectrum is a finite resource and, in order to improve its use, we need to develop innovative spectrum-sharing technologies that allow multiple users to share the same slice of spectrum without interference or degradation of services.

Imagine a mobile device that has the ability to scan across the spectrum, identify frequencies that are currently available or not in use, and send its communication without delay. Spectrum could be fully and effectively utilized under this type of dynamic system, but it is only possible through advances in research, development and testing.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about the Nation's wireless testbed capabilities, our current research and development needs, and what the Federal Government is, or can be, doing to accelerate the efficient use of spectrum and the development of innovative wireless technologies.

I am also interested in hearing more about NIST's plans for the development of a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. I am pleased to see that the role for NIST that Ranking Member Johnson and I supported and advocated for in the creation of an advanced wireless communications system for our first responders in H.R. 3642 was included in the *Middle Class Tax Relief*

and Job Creation Act. I look forward to working with NIST to make sure that this effort is successful and that our first responders have the broadband network they need to keep us all safe.

We need to ensure that the U.S. remains a leader in information technology, and wireless broadband is the key to making this happen. The U.S. is ranked 9th out of the OECD countries in relation to wireless broadband access. We need to do all that we can to ensure that the global “wireless revolution” grows from American innovations and benefits American companies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for calling this important hearing. I yield back the balance of my time.