

REMARKS OF FCC CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

ADVANCED WIRELESS RESEARCH INITIATIVE LAUNCH EVENT

J.W. MARRIOTT HOTEL

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The timing of this meeting on the future of wireless is propitious. It was just yesterday that the FCC voted to set aside high-band spectrum for 5G service making the United States the first nation in the world to take that kind of a step into the future.

If you're in this room, you already know that U.S. leadership in 5G is a national priority.

High-speed, high-capacity, low-latency wireless networks will define our future.

One of the interesting things that happened in yesterday's Commission meeting was that my colleagues talked about how we don't know exactly what 5G will become.

We can see a lot of shadows.

The ability to connect the vast processing power in the cloud with a thin client at high speeds and low latency is going to change the activities at both ends. What this means for the Internet of Things ... what this means for rural connectivity is all quite promising.

But I have no doubt that what 5G becomes will go beyond what we can imagine today. And it will be effected by the very kinds of activities that the Advanced Wireless Research Initiative makes possible.

Yesterday's vote at the Commission, I said at the time, is probably the most important vote that the Commission will take this year. We have set sail for the future. We live today in a network world that was defined by decisions made a decade ago. Similarly, the decisions we made at the Commission this week will be impactful for years to come.

Our wireless future will also be effected by the kind of work enabled by the Advanced Wireless Research Initiative.

It's always been my belief that it's never the primary network that is transformative, but it's the secondary effects of that network. What we at the Commission have just put in place with spectrum, what the Advanced Wireless Initiative will put in place with research and development, will help determine those secondary effects that will transform individual lives and our economy.

There were two other components of yesterday's Commission action that I think are important to highlight in how we will go forward with 5G technology. One was that after making the spectrum available, we're going to get out of the way of the technology.

There are others around the world who are saying, "No, we want to figure out what the standards are and then figure out how to do the spectrum." We think that's backwards.

We want to turn innovation loose, and, again, that's the kind of thing that the Advanced Wireless Research Initiative is going to be stimulating.

As well-intentioned and hard-working as the folks at the FCC and OSTP are, we don't think that they can be as smart as the advances in technology in determining what the applications of 5G will be. So we will stay out of the way.

But we will also exercise our responsibility at the FCC to make sure there is a competitive environment that furnishes the incentive to drive that innovation and bring it to market.

Now making spectrum available, getting out of the way of technology, and maintaining competition is not a new approach. It's the same approach that we took to 4G.

Because we made spectrum available early, we were the first nation to deploy 4G networks at scale. Because we led in networks, we led in users. And because we led in users, developers focused on our market. Today, 91 percent of the world's mobile app downloads are from U.S. businesses. The result has been a mobile app economy that created 1.6 million new jobs.

That's not to suggest 5G is an international zero-sum game. The tides of 5G will lift all boats, and create opportunities for individuals all across the world.

So the bottom line is that the door is open.

Low-band, mid-band and high-band spectrum has all been made available, now, for 5G in the United States.

In high-band alone what we did yesterday was to make available 4 times the number of megahertz that currently exist for all licensed wireless services.

And it's not just licensed spectrum; yesterday we added to an existing unlicensed band to create a massive 14 gigahertz unlicensed band.

So we've set sail. The future is within our grasp. The Advanced Wireless Research Initiative is going to help define what that future looks like.