

SUMMARY OF COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR'S REMARKS ON ENSURING THE U.S. IS 5G READY

On February 28, 2018, FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr announced a new plan to advance 5G deployment in the U.S. In a speech at the Consumer Technology Association's 5G Day, he discussed the importance of maintaining the U.S.' leadership in wireless as we upgrade to 5G, the next-generation of wireless broadband. A key obstacle is our country's outdated infrastructure regulations, which were written for previous generations of wireless technology. To ensure the U.S. is 5G Ready, he announced that the FCC will vote at its March 22 Open Meeting on a plan to streamline the federal historic and environmental review procedures that apply to wireless infrastructure deployments.

If approved, the plan could reduce the regulatory costs of small cell deployment by 80%, cut months off of deployment timelines, and incentivize thousands of new wireless deployments—thus expanding the reach of 5G and other advanced wireless technologies to more Americans.

The Opportunity

- Deploying 5G, the next-generation of wireless service, could mean 3 million new jobs, \$275 billion in private sector network investment, and \$500 billion added to the GDP.
- 5G will support innovative, new use cases—autonomous cars, the Internet of Things, remote surgery and telehealth, smart city applications, public safety, and faster home and mobile broadband.

The Challenge

- There is a global race to 5G. The U.S. led the world in 4G, and now other countries are competing for the investment and innovations necessary to deploy 5G.
- The country that wins this race will be the one that moves quickly to update and reform its regulatory structures. Now is the time for the U.S. to get 5G Ready.
- Our federal historic and environmental review procedures are not suited to support 5G deployments, which can be smaller than a backpack and attach to existing structures.
- The fees associated with these procedures have risen dramatically in recent years, spiking by as much as 2,500% in parts of the country and needlessly costing millions of dollars that could have been put toward infrastructure deployment. This threatens our 5G leadership.

The Plan

- Exclude small wireless facilities from the environmental and historic review procedures that were designed for large, macrocell deployments by determining that they are neither "federal undertakings" nor "major federal actions." This is projected to reduce the regulatory costs of small cell deployment by 80%, cut deployment timelines in half, and expand 5G deployments.
- Streamline the historic review procedures that will continue applying to larger wireless deployments by updating the Section 106 Tribal consultation process to address up-front fees, clarify the consultation process, and adopt a clear timeline within which deployments can commence when a Tribe does not respond. These reforms will only apply to deployments located off of Tribal lands and outside of reservation boundaries.
- Revise the FCC's approach to environmental reviews by adopting a shot clock for the FCC's own processing of Environmental Assessments (EAs) and, for deployments in floodplains, clarifying that EAs need not be filed for deployments one foot above the base flood elevation.