Remarks of Hon. Cory Gardner
President & CEO, NCTA – The Internet & Television Association
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Tease Ajit about the Chiefs.

Quick intro and thank the organization for giving me the time to speak.

KIP493 Base to KVE697 unit 1. I will never forget these letters and numbers – 40 years later I still remember them. I remember them better than I remember my Anniversary date…don't tell anyone.

I had no idea what they meant, why I had to use them, or that some three-letter agency would be involved in licensing its use. I didn't know anything about *unlicensed* spectrum for that matter. I just knew it was fun to use – and it let me speak to Dad in the combine or Aunt Kathy 30 miles away on the farm.

<u>And here I am today, at a conference, on spectrum, speaking to the experts in the room about spectrum. About licensed ***AND*** unlicensed spectrum. About an all-of-the-above approach for innovation that doesn't stifle but unleashes. One that doesn't halt progress for one in order to advance the other.</u>

<u>One that doesn't yoke our future to the status quo but releases investment and incites the kind of spontaneous combustion of ideas that comes from incentives to explore and dive deep into new technology.</u>

<u>The kind of incentive that is all-of-the-above spectrum policy. A holistic approach – America needs it all – with multiple avenues of access to spectrum to meet demand. Its about tomorrow – not yesterday.</u>

I've been on the job for a little over 30 days. And in that time, NCTA has hosted Chairman Carr for a discussion about our industry, held a fireside chat with Chairman Brett Guthrie, we were joined by Senator Mark Warner. We heard from Robin Colwell about the work done to keep whole the innovation of 6Ghz. Commissioners Trusty and Gomez took the stage and so many more.

A very simple truth ran through all our conversations and continues today: spectrum has become central to the cable industry, just as it has for the country. But just as there are very few "stock parts" in a "Stock Car", cable isn't really just cable. Its connectivity – it's the very business of connectivity.

And wireless is critical to connecting our customers at home, at work, and on the go. Good spectrum policy has become essential–both to the connectivity providers I represent and to the nation.

We have been relentless, not only in improving the speed and power of wired broadband networks, but also in investing in the technology to support new wireless capabilities that foster innovation and o`er consumer value.

In wireless, we've taken a pragmatic, all-of-the-above strategy to build new wireless services that depend on exclusive licensed, shared licensed, and unlicensed technologies.

And with these innovations, we have seen cable's rapid ascent in wireless services. Together, our companies are now the Nation's fourth-largest mobile wireless competitor. We also operate the largest Wi-Fi networks in the country, and cable companies are taking a leading role in driving adoption of next-generation Wi-Fi.

Cable, like our friends, sees spectrum as essential to our businesses and to the country. The spectrum policies we as a nation adopt will play a major role in fueling economic growth and in competing with China, to ensure that the US maintains technological leadership and remains the home of AI innovation.

But we have di`erent views from some on what spectrum allocation and management policies are best suited to propel our country's continued success.

High-powered coverage networks will continue to be important. But for the US to maintain leadership in the next AI-inspired digital decade, we need much more innovation, competition, and localized capacity than we'll ever get by reliance on an old playbook.

We'll need to embrace models that promote access and intensive use of our limited spectrum resources.

First, as cable operators and many other wireless service providers around the country have demonstrated, Wi-Fi is critical to the nation's future. Unlocking more spectrum to support existing and new innovations in Wi-Fi must be a national imperative.

Second, cable companies have learned that a healthy, competitive and thriving wireless marketplace requires an all-of-the-above spectrum strategy, focused on new opportunities to unlock government spectrum in ways that support commercial use. A single-minded focus on high-power exclusive technologies will fail in the marketplace and will fail the country as we compete with China.

The only realistic hope for our industries and our country to maintain leadership in the future is by working to unlock government spectrum in ways that support both security ***and*** commercial interests.

It's self-evident. For most Americans, Wi-Fi *is* the internet.

So, let's start with Wi-Fi. Consumers rely on Wi-Fi more than all other wireless technologies *combined* for home connectivity, school, work, entertainment, healthcare and more.

The average American household has 21 connected devices – and Wi-Fi is far and away the most common way for those devices to access the internet. Wi-Fi carries 80-90 percent of tra`ic even on mobile phones, and unlike cellular, it's available to everyone, not just through a handful of dominant companies.

That means Wi-Fi and the unlicensed spectrum it runs on are critical if Americans are going to realize the full benefits of the trillions of dollars in network investments and upgrades that US internet providers have undertaken.

President Trump understood this massive impact – and that's why he opened the *entire* 6 GHz band for Wi-Fi use in 2020, and the benefits for the country have already been tremendous.

Because of the Trump Administration's decision on 6 GHz, Wi-Fi will deliver approximately $9.3 trillion for the US from 2023-2027. $9.3 TRILLION.

But we have to keep getting our policies right. Our nation needs to decide if we are going to play the same verse and let China set the rules, or if we are going to continue open innovation. Wi-Fi is America's greatest wireless advantage in the competition with China.

While Chinese companies dominate the worldwide market in 5G and 6G technologies, it is American companies that have the advantage on Wi-Fi.

That's why the CCP has been working to block Wi-Fi's expansion into the 6 GHz band in other countries, in favor of design choices exclusively benefitting licensed cellular networks.

The CCP hopes that by cutting into the 6 GHz band it will undercut the US, slow the spread of next-generation Wi-Fi, and drive revenue to CCP-backed equipment vendors like Huawei.

The 100 year marathon succeeds by blocking Wi-Fi out, tilting the game, and driving business toward their state owned enterprise.

The spread and use of Wi-Fi around the globe is a major US strategic advantage and US firms benefit when countries choose Wi-Fi over Huawei's push for its 5G/6G technology.

The 6 GHz band was the first new Wi-Fi band in a decade and is rapidly supporting the adoption of new wireless devices, unleashing technology, device innovation and access points with advanced capabilities.

And just as we think of a pipeline to support licensed spectrum, we need a pipeline that can support the future expansion of Wi-Fi. And the band that makes the most sense is 7125-7250 MHz. While there are many bands potentially available for mobile carriers, this is the only band uniquely situated to support Wi-Fi's continued innovation in the near term.

We must ensure we don't lockout Wi-Fi's future.

Shared spectrum is essential to America's continued wireless leadership

We must do more also to find new spectrum that can support commercial use.

Take Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) systems that harmoniously operate alongside the U.S. Navy today. The FCC's shared-licensed CBRS auction produced more auction bidders and winners than any other auction.

The CBRS framework has been and continues to be a resounding success:

- More than $14 billion in private capital has already been invested in CBRS
- Between April 2021 and July 2024, the number of active CBRS devices jumped more than 200 percent

There are some who spend a lot of time attacking CBRS, they see it as a threat to controlling licensed spectrum while keeping would-be innovators at bay.

CBRS represents a new approach, creating commercial opportunity through coexistence that allows more players on the field to tailor solutions and meet unmet needs. Most importantly, it creates a means of making *more* spectrum available for commercial use.

The reality is that there are a lot of competing needs for spectrum today. We can't a`ord to look only backwards to the way we handled spectrum yesterday, and CBRS and government sharing is a model for e`icient and e`ective spectrum use for the complicated bands and use cases we face now and in the future.

Additionally, the CBRS shared-spectrum model has been critical to cementing America's lead in the development of private wireless networking services. It has democratized access to licensed and general access wireless services in ways that are paying daily dividends here at home -- at hospitals, schools, airports, farms, stadiums, and factory floors.

The suggestion that we should change the rules of the game in the midst of such activity, not only is a disservice to the investment expectations of today's innovators, but as equally as dangerous, distracts the government's focus from identifying new government bands that can shared and support commercial use. This is not the time to 'rearrange deck chairs' or 'pick winners and losers' in current commercial bands. This is the time to rely on spectrum sharing technology to seek new opportunities for sharing, giving America the chance to use the power of American innovation to move our networks to the future.

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We all know we're at an important moment. We must work as a country to meet consumer demand and to adapt to the demands of a world that will increasingly be AI-enabled. And we must do that in bands that are crowded and complicated.

The cable industry – our country's connectivity industry - is pushing hard to do it, and with the right spectrum policies supporting innovation, competition, broadband and AI investments. I'm confident we'll succeed.