



Telecommunications Industry Association

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December 1, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer & Leader McCarthy:

The Telecommunications Industry Association (“TIA”) is writing to you to request appropriate funding for the implementation of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act (Public Law 116- 124) (“the Act”), which was unanimously passed by Congress and signed into law on March 12, 2020. A multi-association letter from organizations representing all aspects of the U.S. information and communications technology industry was previously sent to you on May 21, 2020 regarding this issue.

Funding for this law is critical, especially during the ongoing pandemic, to ensuring continued connectivity and consumer well-being, addressing important national security concerns identified by the government, and implementing the Federal Communication Commission’s (“FCC”) Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program. The FCC has already taken steps to protect communications network supply chains, including prohibiting the use of the Universal Service Fund to eligible telecommunications companies that purchase any equipment or services from companies posing a threat to national security.

The FCC is planning on taking another major step next month in securing our communications networks. The FCC Chairman’s Office released a draft Second Report and Order (“Draft Order”) that will be considered at the FCC’s open meeting on December 10, 2020.¹ This 130-page Draft Order establishes the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program (“Program”), which will provide for the removal, replacement, and disposal of covered communications equipment and services, but its start is conditioned on Congress appropriating the funds required to cover the cost of the Program.

¹ Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain Through FCC Programs, Draft Second Report and Order, WC Docket No. 18-89 (rel. Nov. 19, 2020) (available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-368268A1.pdf>).



As set forth in the FCC's Fact Sheet,² the FCC's Program would:

- Adopt rules to publish and modify a list of communications equipment and services that Congress or enumerated national security agencies or interagency bodies with appropriate national security expertise determine pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the safety and security of its people.
- Prohibit the use of any Federal subsidy that is made available through a program administered by the Commission and that provides funds to be used for the capital expenditures necessary for the provision of advanced communications service to purchase, rent, or otherwise obtain any covered communications equipment or services.
- Establish the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program, which will provide funds for the removal, replacement, and disposal of covered communications equipment and services, and condition the start of the program on Congress appropriating the funds the Commission estimates that program will cost.
- Require Eligible Telecommunications Carriers and participants in the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program to remove, replace, and dispose of covered communications equipment and services in their networks.
- Require all providers of advanced communications services to report whether their networks use covered communications equipment or services acquired after August 14, 2018.

Secure telecommunications networks have never been more important than they are today. As a result of the ongoing pandemic forcing many Americans to work and learn from home, we have seen significant reliance on and increases in network usage in our day-to-day lives. TIA's member companies are working hard to keep Americans connected in all parts of the country, but the security and resilience of these networks must be ensured through the removal of equipment and services that pose a threat to national security. Funding this effort also puts Americans to work on upgrading high-speed networks in largely rural, underserved areas while ensuring that our nation's critically important communications networks are built with secure and trusted network components and supported by verifiable, industry-driven standards.

To ensure the implementation of the FCC's Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program, we ask that you fully fund the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

David S. Stehlin

David S. Stehlin
CEO, TIA

² *Id.*