



Homeland
Security

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your November 17, 2017 letter.

International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI) catchers enable the surveillance of cellular communications and devices. Since 2011, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has granted authorizations for such equipment. According to the FCC, the equipment authorizations for each of these devices has limited their marketing and sale to federal, state, local public safety and law enforcement officials only, and required state and local law enforcement agencies to advance coordinate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the acquisition and use of the equipment.

Use of IMSI catchers by malicious actors to track and monitor cellular users is unlawful and threatens the security of communications, resulting in safety, economic, and privacy risks. The National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) continues to work with the FCC, the Communications Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations to assess the national security and other risks associated with these vulnerabilities as well as methods to mitigate these risks. IMSI catcher threats were addressed in the Study on Mobile Device Security published by the Department of Homeland Security during April 2017. The report recommended areas for additional research or partnerships. Overall, NPPD believes the malicious use of IMSI catchers is a real and growing risk.

Thank you again for your letter. Responses to your specific questions are enclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Krebs".

Christopher C. Krebs
Senior Official Performing the Duties
of the Under Secretary

Enclosure