

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

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

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you consider additional legislation to maintain economic stability and stimulate growth throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to provide funding to support the development and deployment of open and interoperable wireless radio access networks (RANs) that can help enable more flexible, efficient, secure, resilient, and intelligent mobile communication. As the COVID-19 outbreak has shown, increased stress on global supply chains can threaten public safety and hinder economic growth. By investing in open radio access network (Open RAN) technologies, Congress can help facilitate a network evolution with the potential to create lasting domestic economic opportunities for American workers while increasing supply chain diversity and promoting competition.

A critical component of mobile networks, RANs serve as the connection between phones or hotspots and a carrier's core network and the internet. As mobile traffic continues to grow, it will be necessary for our networks to evolve. Open RAN technologies that are interoperable and based on open standards can help maximize the benefits of modern advances in communications technology like 5G. By utilizing software-based RAN architecture that leverages machine learning, network resources may be allocated quickly to the areas where they are needed most. This could ultimately provide consumers with a more efficient mobile experience and create new opportunities to manage operations when traffic increases.

The flexible nature of Open RAN technology also creates an opportunity for a more diverse supply chain ecosystem to develop. With interfaces and hardware built to open standards, trusted manufacturers, including American vendors, will have new opportunities to enter the market and compete. This increased supply chain diversity could mean more hardware and software options for network operators globally that can compete with current state-backed equipment being produced abroad. Diversity of vendors is important to avoid a situation where a network operator is completely reliant on a single vendor to maintain operations.

Huawei is rapidly emerging as a leading producer of 5G network equipment. This has allowed them to integrate their equipment throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and emerging markets.

While Congress has taken meaningful steps to locate and remove vulnerable equipment produced by Huawei and ZTE from U.S. networks, without viable domestic alternatives, the U.S. has struggled to convince allies that similar steps are necessary in their countries. By investing in startups, entrepreneurs, and trusted vendors that are developing alternatives to Huawei and ZTE, we can ensure that the deployment of Open RAN technologies happens in a way that is technologically neutral, market-based, and scalable. Establishing additional trusted alternatives to state-backed, untrusted vendors would mean secure technology is available for our allies to replace existing vulnerable equipment and deploy in new networks. American companies and trusted suppliers can be at the forefront of creating this innovation, which can in turn provide new job opportunities for American workers to meet the demands of a growing 5G global market.

We strongly encourage you to include provisions in any upcoming Coronavirus response legislation that provide funding for grants to speed the development and deployment of open interface standards-based compatible, interoperable equipment, such as equipment developed pursuant to the standards set forth by organizations such as the O-RAN Alliance, the Telecom Infra Project, 3GPP, the O-RAN Software Community. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, reliable communications networks are vital. Making strong investments now will help ensure the U.S. remains the world leader in communications technology for years to come.

Sincerely,



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Tim Walberg
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
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Doug Lamborn
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Ro Khanna
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