

December 1, 2021

Mr. Brian Deese, Director
National Economic Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Deese:

We write to express our deep concern about the national security implications of the Federal Aviation Administration's flawed assertions that aviation safety could be at risk with the U.S. deployment of 5G telecommunications technology. We urge a speedy and decisive resolution of this matter.

There is broad consensus that the so-called fifth generation of wireless technology, or 5G, represents a seismic shift in telecommunications technology. The countries that successfully deploy robust nationwide 5G networks will be positioned to influence everything from equipment standards to network and data security protocols internationally. The stakes are high and the U.S. must out-innovate China. China has made its bold ambitions and intentions clear through its "Made in China 2025" policy roadmap that outlines a series of state-sponsored initiatives to dominate global high-tech policy and industries. U.S. weapons systems, cyber security, and intelligence capabilities will rely heavily on 5G technology, so there is a strategic imperative for the U.S. to not let China win the race to 5G and dictate the terms of the 5G revolution.

President Biden has a realist's understanding of China's intentions. In recent months, he has spoken candidly about the security implications of China's growing military presence, affirmed U.S. commitment to the defense of Taiwan, and announced measures to curtail securities investments that could bolster China's military. On the economic front, the Biden Administration has linked the recently-enacted \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, a \$250 billion measure to strengthen U.S. technology capacity the Senate approved over the summer, and other measures to successfully competing with China in the years ahead.

Given the wide-reaching nature of the China threat, it is troubling that the FAA has effectively demanded that U.S. wireless companies' hit the pause button on their plans to activate wireless spectrum that is critical to new 5G networks by warning these networks could disrupt navigation and communications systems that operate in the C-Band of the spectrum. The FAA, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and other agencies have long been aware of this potential and given it appropriately rigorous review. The conclusion of these inter-agency discussions and engineering assessments of C-Band characteristics, is that 5G networks would not undermine aviation safety. Internationally, this spectrum is being used without any issue in nearly 40 countries.

With an abundance of caution, the FCC has agreed to consider anew the FAA's assertions and work together to resolve them during this temporary 30-day pause. Any additional delays would undermine the multi-billion-dollar investments U.S. companies have made in 5G and cast doubt about the U.S. government's commitment to winning the 5G race. China state media wasted no time in mocking the infrastructure bill as a "feeble imitation" of China's prowess in industrial policy.

It would be a costly and avoidable mistake with profound consequences for U.S. economic competitiveness and national security interests to allow the dispute over spectrum policy to linger indefinitely and sideline U.S. telecommunications industry leaders. U.S. government agencies should communicate that the U.S. a formidable competitor and not make unforced errors that will support China's ambitions.

Sincerely,

Former Chairman Mike Rogers (R-MI, Ret.)
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Christopher Burnham
Former Under Secretary General for Management of the United Nations
Former Under Secretary of State for Management (Acting)

Robert F. Dees
U.S. Army, Major General (Ret.)

Douglas E. Lee
U.S. Army, Brigadier General (Ret.)

Thomas Magness, P.E.
U.S. Army, Colonel (Ret.)

James "Spider" Marks
U.S. Army, Major General (Ret.)

Sherri Ramsay
Former Director, NSA Threat Operations Center

Diane Rinaldo
Former Administrator, NTIA (Acting)

Francis X. Taylor
U.S. Air Force, Brigadier General (Ret.)