



Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Transportation and the Environment, public roundtable, “Implementation of 5G Small Cell Technology in the District”

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Testimony of

Krisztina Pusok, Ph.D.
Director of Policy and Research
American Consumer Institute, Washington, D.C.

Chairperson Cheh and Councilmembers of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the implementation 5G small cell technology in the District. My name is Krisztina Pusok, and I am the Director of Policy and Research at the American Consumer Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan research and educational institute with the mission to identify, analyze, and project the interests of consumers in selected legislative and rulemaking proceedings in matters that affect the consumers, including but not limited to new technologies.

The 5th Generation (5G) wireless technology, expected to provide consumers speeds that are at least ten times faster than the current 4G standard, promises to bring significant benefits to American consumers and the U.S. economy, benefits that will stretch far beyond the broadband industry, catalyzing innovations in transportation, medicine, agriculture, education, and public administration, to name just a few. Per one of ACI’s recent analyses, deployment of 5G networks in the District of Columbia alone is expected to generate \$5.6 billion consumer

benefits, \$1.2 billion investments, \$90 million employment earnings for the District, and 190 additional jobs per year over a period of 7 years.

Of course, 5G networks cannot be built overnight. Yet, the expected benefits are highly dependent on the timely deployment of this technology. To ensure that these opportunities are realized, and the projected consumer benefits are not being postponed, or in a worse scenario diminished, it is paramount that the DDOT works together with the wireless broadband sector to ensure a prompt process of implementing 5G small cell technology in the District. While there might be some legitimate concerns— as it is the citizens of the District who use these roads and live in this area, after all— hold-ups can cause frustrating delays to broadband deployment, thus deterring broadband investment and denying consumers the benefits of 5G services.

Accelerating deployment requires harmonized rules, reasonable fees, and permit approvals that are deemed granted after a specified period of time. Specifically, we hope the following recommendations are given serious consideration as they are vital to not hindering a timely deployment of 5G technology and its benefits:

- ✓ Streamline applications for siting, use of municipal poles, and ROWs (use a short shot clock covering the entire review process, instead of delays or moratoria on small cell investment).
- ✓ Review batches of applications with similar facilities and equipment should be considered at once, instead of sequentially.
- ✓ Wireless providers should not be discriminated against for their access to similar land use requirements, compared to other industries.

In short, cost-based fees, batch approvals of permits, and a short shot clock are critical in getting the small cells deployed.

The residents of the District, like every community in the United States, no matter how large or small, stand to benefit from this state-of-the-art broadband connectivity.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this roundtable.