

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

We respectfully request Congress immediately address the funding shortfall for the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program. If not funded appropriately before the end of the year, whether through our stand-alone Supporting National Security with Spectrum Act or in a legislative package, the shortfall will threaten our national security and pose a serious risk of broadband and cellular outages for all Americans.

In 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act into law to remove communications equipment or services that pose a national security risk from U.S. networks. This effort, known as the “Rip-and-Replace” program, was initially allocated \$1.9 billion for disposal of Huawei or ZTE communications equipment. However, the required funding levels have exceeded the appropriated amount, and the program now faces a \$3.08 billion shortfall.

It is estimated that there are over 6,000 sites across the United States in need of this funding. Without it, Chinese equipment will continue to pose a significant national security risk to the United States and our communication networks. Additionally, several recipients of previously deployed funding would have to shut down their networks, leaving many rural and remote areas of the country without access to basic broadband services.

To address this issue, we introduced H.R.9340 and S.4049, the Supporting National Security with Spectrum Act, to fully fund the Rip-and-Replace program. The legislation is fully paid for by re-auctioning specific AWS-3 licenses returned to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). It is estimated that these bands are worth \$3.3 billion and the Congressional Budget


Office has stated on a preliminary basis that our bill will “significantly reduce direct spending.” Since the FCC previously auctioned off this band, no Department of Defense equities are at stake. This legislation would allow for the re-auctioning of these AWS-3 licenses, regardless of FCC’s authority to conduct spectrum auctions.

It is our duty to ensure programs of national security importance are adequately and responsibly funded. We look forward to working with you in this effort and urge you to ensure the Rip-and-Replace program is fully funded before the end of the year.

Sincerely,




August Pfluger
Member of Congress



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



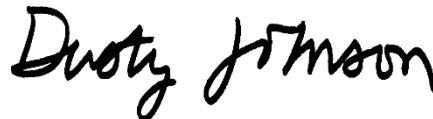
Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress



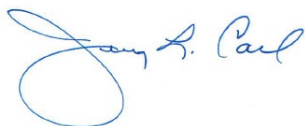
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Jerry L. Carl
Member of Congress