

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on 5G Cellular Communications Technology and an Exchange With Reporters

April 12, 2019

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. Big day. Very important day. We have a lot of important days at our White House. And this is, to me, the future.

I want to thank you all for being here to discuss a critical issue for our country's future: winning the race to be the world's leading provider of 5G cellular communications networks. It's all about 5G now. We were at 4G, and everybody was saying, "We have to get 4G." And then they said, before that, "We have to get 3G." And now we have to get 5G, and 5G is a big deal. And that's going to be there for a while. And I guess, at some point, we'll be talking to you about number 6. What do you think? [*Laughter*] Do you think that's true, Ajit?

But right now we want to be the leader in this. We're the leader in almost everything else.

And we're grateful to be joined by FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, who's been doing a fantastic job, and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Stephen Censky. Thank you very much, Stephen. Appreciate it. And tell Sonny "hello."

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Stephen Censky. Okay. Great.

The President. He's doing a tremendous job. Really tremendous.

Secure 5G networks will absolutely be a vital link to America's prosperity and national security in the 21st century; 5G will be as much as 100 times faster than the current 4G cellular networks. It will transform the way our citizens work, learn, communicate, and travel. It will make American farms more productive, American manufacturing more competitive, and American health care better and more accessible. Basically, it covers almost everything, when you get right down to it. Pretty amazing.

And just as 4G networks paved the way for smartphones and all of the exciting breakthroughs—they made possible so many things—this will be more secure and resilient; 5G networks will also create astonishing and really thrilling new opportunities for our people, opportunities that we've never even thought we had a possibility of looking at.

We cannot allow any other country to outcompete the United States in this powerful industry of the future. We are leading by so much in so many different industries of that type, and we just can't let that happen. The race to 5G is a race America must win, and it's a race, frankly, that our great companies are now involved in. We've given them the incentive they need. It's a race that we will win.

In the United States, our approach is private-sector driven and private-sector led. The Government doesn't have to spend lots of money. According to some estimates, the wireless industry plans to invest \$275 billion in 5G networks, creating 3 million American jobs quickly—very quickly—and adding \$500 billion to our economy.

And, as you probably heard, we had another alternative of doing it; that would be through Government investment and leading through the Government. We don't want to do that, because it won't be nearly as good, nearly as fast. And especially in that business, I think that they'll be better doing the job than a lot of the folks who we know and love.

To accelerate and incentivize these investments, my administration is focused on freeing up as much wireless spectrum as needed—we're going to free it up—so they'll be able to get out there and get it done—and removing regulatory barriers to the buildout of networks.

As Chairman Pai will discuss with you in a moment, the FCC is taking very bold action—probably bolder than they've ever taken before; it's a new frontier—to make wireless spectrum available. By next year, the United States is on pace to have more 5G spectrum than any other country in the world. That's a big statement because, as you know, some people got ahead of us. We should have been doing this a long time ago, as advanced as it may be.

In addition, last October, I directed the Department of Commerce to develop a National Spectrum Strategy to free up even more spectrum for economic activity, including 5G. The FCC has also taken action to streamline the permitting process for 5G infrastructure with State and local governments. That's a big deal. It takes too long to get permits. We're going to free that situation up, and we're going to put limits, and the local areas are going to listen to us very, very strongly. They have a big incentive to do that.

They must now approve new physical infrastructure within 90 days, instead of many years. It can sometimes take 3, 4, and 5 years. We're going to put a limit of 90 days. And there is now a cap on the unreasonable fees local governments often charge. They get greedy. They think, "Hey, we can really take advantage." And it ends up that everybody gets hurt. So we're putting a cap on those fees. These changes will contribute greatly to building high-speed networks across America. And it's going to happen very quickly. Very, very quickly.

By the end of this year, the United States will have 92 5G deployments in markets nationwide. The next nearest country, South Korea, will have 48. So we have 92, compared to 48. And we're going to accelerate that pace greatly.

But we must not rest; the race is far from over. American companies must lead the world in cellular technology: 5G networks must be secure; they must be strong. They have to be guarded from the enemy—we do have enemies out there—and they will be. They must cover every community, and they must be deployed as soon as possible.

As we are making great progress with 5G, we're also focused on rural communities that do not have access to broadband at all. And we have a couple of people from the great farms that I love, that I'm sure voted for me. I won't ask them, but they seemed—[laughter]—I think they, for the most part—yes? [Laughter] Good. I think, for the most part, they did. I think—I know that almost automatically. I'd be very surprised. [Laughter]

But I have to say, I've been talking about broadband for the—for rural America—the farmers and others. They have really been—they just haven't been treated properly. And now what we're doing is, we're making it a priority. That's the areas we want to go to first, so they're covered. We're working closely with Federal agencies to get networks built in rural America faster and at much, much lower cost than it is even today.

So now I'd like to introduce a very special man who's really worked hard and gained the respect of the world, truly—because they see what we're doing in our country—who will making two major announcements to accelerate our 5G future and extend broadband access to every American.

No matter where you are, you will have access, very quickly, to 5G. And it's going to be a different life. I don't know that it's going to be better. Maybe you're happy the way it is right now. [Laughter] But I can say, technologically, it won't even be close.

So, Chairman Pai, thank you very much. Please, say a few words.

Thank you very much, Ajit.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit V. Pai. Thank you, Mr. President. Appreciate you.

Well, thank you, Mr. President, for your compelling vision of U.S. leadership on 5G. I also want to thank Larry Kudlow, the Director of the National Economic Council, for your steadfast support of this vision.

Mr. President, as you observed, America must win the race to 5G, the next generation of wireless connectivity. And this matters for two key reasons. The first is national competitiveness. We want the good-paying jobs that develop and deploy 5G technologies—jobs that support some of the folks in this room—to be created here, in America. We want these technologies to give our economy a leg up as we compete against the rest of the world.

The second reason U.S. leadership matters is that 5G will improve Americans' lives in so many ways, from precision agriculture, to smart transportation networks, to telemedicine, and more. We want Americans to be the first to benefit from this new digital revolution while protecting our innovators and our citizens. And as you pointed out, Mr. President, we don't want rural Americans to be left behind.

And, Mr. President, that's why I'm pleased to report that America is now well positioned to win the race to fast, secure, and reliable 5G. And don't just take my word for it. In February, ABI Research stated, and I quote, "It is the United States who will win the 5G race in the short term." That same month, Cisco projected that, in 3 years, 5G would be more than twice as prevalent in North America as in Asia.

Last week, CTIA reported that America leads the world with the most commercial 5G deployments of any nation. And just this past Tuesday, it was reported that 5G-related job listings here in the United States increased 12 percent in just the past 3 weeks according to data from an online job search service.

Today, 5G is a success story, an American success story. Well, how are we getting the job done? As the lead agency on 5G, the FCC is pursuing a three-part strategy called the 5G FAST Plan. First, we're freeing up spectrum, the invisible airwaves that carry wireless traffic. We finished our first 5G spectrum auction in January, and we're holding a second, right now, that has already generated almost \$2 billion in bids.

Second, we're making it easier to install wireless infrastructure: 5G will rely heavily on a web of small antennas, but when I came into office, regulations designed for tall towers threatened to strangle our 5G future in redtape. We have eliminated these rules, because infrastructure the size of a pizza box shouldn't have to jump through the same regulatory hoops as a 200-foot cell tower.

And third, we've taken action to encourage the deployment of optical fiber. That is because 5G isn't just about wireless. We'll also need strong fiber networks to carry 5G traffic once it goes from the air to the ground. And we've done a lot to make that happen, including ending heavy-handed regulations imposed by the prior administration.

And here, too, we are getting results. Last year, fiber was deployed to more new locations in the United States than in any year before. But in the race to 5G, our early success is still early. We still need to do more, and we will.

And so today I'm announcing two new steps the FCC will take to build on our momentum. First, the FCC intends to start its third 5G spectrum auction on December 10 of this year. This will be the largest spectrum auction in American history. We will be selling 3,400 megahertz in three different bands. And for those of you who aren't wireless experts, that is a lot of spectrum.

Second, to help build the infrastructure of the future, the FCC aims to create a \$20.4 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund headed by the agency. This money will extend high-speed broadband to up to 4 million homes and small businesses in rural America. These next-generation networks will bring greater economic opportunity to America's heartland, including some of the great jobs building infrastructure, and they will help support future 5G technologies.

In closing, I want to thank you again, Mr. President, for your leadership on 5G. Your White House has advanced your vision in many ways, from international treaty negotiations to much-needed regulatory reforms. I appreciate all these efforts, and in the same spirit, this FCC will help build a great and lasting legacy of American success on 5G.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Ajit. Very good.

Ivanka worked very hard on this. Maybe say a couple of words, Ivanka? Please.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Sure. Well, thank you. And thank you, everyone, for being here today. Obviously, American dominance in the industries of the future is predicated on connectivity and digital connectivity. And 5G is the future. And so I think everyone in this room feels very comfortable to know it's in your very capable hands. And, President, we thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

And I'm so glad that we were able to include in today's discussion our priorities on rural broadband. So that is something that, from the earliest days of the administration, we've sought to really deliver on. And with today's announcement, in addition to the milestones that have been achieved over the last 2 years, we can say that we're bringing 5G and rural broadband across this country.

So, really, thank you.

The President. Thank you, honey.

Would you like to say something on behalf of the farmers and our great people? Please.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association President-elect Marty Smith. Certainly. Mr. President, we really appreciate the fact that you have put this emphasis on rural America.

The President. That's right.

Mr. Smith. The things that you have done in office have been tremendous for us. We look forward to the next several years of you continuing to do that.

The thing that you struck today, though, of deregulation, broadening it out, and letting the American business—letting the American farmers and ranchers—fix the problems of this country, really rings hard with us. That's what we try to do, and that's what we'll take forward to build this nation.

Thank you for your help.

The President. You'll do it. Thank you very much.

National Association of Tower Erectors Chairman James L. Miller. Mr. President, Chairman Pai, on behalf of the National Association of Tower Erectors, our 900-member companies, we build, deploy, and maintain the wireless infrastructure of this Nation. And you all are fixing to put us to work, and we appreciate it. [*Laughter*]

The President. And your people do an incredible job, Jimmy. Thank you very much. What a great job.

And they go up high. How high do you go?

Above All Tower Climbing, LLC, Director of Operations Jack D. Ray. I've been up 800-foot.

The President. Yes. And somebody said 200 feet and sometimes more. That's a long way up. And you feel very safe, right? Huh? Who said 200? [*Laughter*]

Teltronic Towers Project Manager Ken Massengale. A thousand.

The President. A thousand? Come here. Come here.

Mr. Massengale. That's a big tower.

The President. Come here. [*Laughter*] How high do you go?

Mr. Massengale. Up to 1,000 feet.

The President. I don't want that job. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much. Thank you all very much. I appreciate it. This is going to be a great, great thing.

Border Security/Sanctuary Cities

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——can you tell us your plans about sanctuary cities and illegal migrants—[*inaudible*]?

The President. Well, you know, the people that are putting sanctuary cities where they're not even wanted—because as you know, in California and other places, a lot of communities want to get out of sanctuary cities; they don't want them. But they always seem to have open arms.

So we thought rather than moving the illegal immigrants to other parts of the country—first of all, we're getting them, and we're doing the best we can with very bad laws. We have to change the laws. But we're apprehending thousands and thousands of people a day, and the law only allows us to hold them, as you know, for 20 days, because of the most ridiculous laws, probably, we have in this country.

If Ajit had laws like that for 5G, you wouldn't have anything built. You'd never have the first cell put up.

But we have horrible, old-fashioned laws that are put in by the Democrats. We're willing to change them. We can do it in—I used to say 45 minutes—we can do it in 15 minutes, whether it's catch-and-release or chain migration or any of them.

The asylum laws are absolutely insane. They come up. In many cases, they're rough gang members. In many cases, they're people with tremendous crime records, and they're given a statement to read by lawyers that stand there waiting for them, "Read this statement." And it says: "I have great fear for my life. I have great fear for being in my country." Even though, in some cases, some of these people are holding their country's flags and waving their country's flags. And then, they talk about the fear they have of being in the country, that the flag they were waving freely.

So we are looking at the possibility, strongly looking at it, to be honest with you. California, the Governor wants to have a lot of people coming in, refugees coming in. A lot of sanctuary cities. So we'll give them to the sanctuary cities, maybe, to take care of, if that's the way they want it, because we can only hold them, under the current law, for 20 days. So we apprehend them by the thousands and thousands a day.

I have to say Border Patrol has been incredible. The job they're doing is incredible. The wall is going up. It's going up fairly rapidly. We're doing another big section. We start another big section tomorrow. But we're building miles and miles of wall.

And we're going to have—I think we'll be close to 400 miles built by the end of next year. We need that. Just got back from Texas, and some of the ranchers told me—you look at Brooks County, you look at other places—some of the ranchers told me you have bodies lying all over the land of people where the coyotes give them a can of soda, and they give them a sandwich and they say, "Houston is 300 miles in that direction." And the people don't know what that means. That means they can't make it. That means they have no chance, and they die. It's something I never heard. I never heard it to this extent. Many people die. And they'll say, "Just head in that direction."

And we are doing a lot about it. If we had the wall, we wouldn't have that. If we had the wall, people wouldn't be coming up. Mexico is now apprehending and bringing back to the various countries that we're talking about—Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador—they're bringing people back to those countries; Colombia, to a certain extent—and they're going back to those countries.

But we could fix that and so fast if the Democrats would agree. But if they don't agree, we might as well do what they always say they want: We'll bring the illegal—really, you call them the "illegals." I call them the "illegals." They came across the border illegally. We'll bring them to sanctuary city areas and let that particular area take care of it, whether it's a State or whatever it might be.

California certainly is always saying, "Oh, we want more people." And they want more people in their sanctuary cities. Well, we'll give them more people. We can give them a lot. We can give them an unlimited supply. And let's see if they're so happy. They say, "We have open arms." They're always saying they have open arms. Let's see if they have open arms.

The alternative is to change the laws, and we can do it very, very quickly, very easily. Okay? Okay?

Border Security

Q. Are you asking for more troops on the border as well?

The President. We're going to put more troops on the border, yes. We're going to. And you know, the thing is, our country is doing so well economically. We're setting records that a lot of people are coming up for that reason. A lot of people are coming up for bad reasons too.

We have a lot of very, very bad people with big criminal records trying to get through. And the Border Patrol has done an incredible job with them. Those are our focus. They really have done a really incredible job. And when they have been through, and when they've been let through over the years—ICE—all over Long Island—and they come, and they get them, and they take them back, and we get them the hell out of here.

That's happening all over our country—ICE. But the job that ICE and that, really, Border Patrol does is an incredible job. And law enforcement in this country is—the job they're doing is really incredible. You know, I don't know if you saw the crime stats, but the statistics are that crime is way down in our country over the last year. Way, way down. And so that's despite all of the problems we have at the border. And we're straightening that out.

So, on sanctuary cities, as per your question, we are giving very strong consideration to having people—after a 20-day period, because, again you're not allowed, legally, to hold them for more than that—we will move them into sanctuary cities.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Agriculture George E. "Sonny" Perdue; and Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California.

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