

Opening Statement of Chairman Brett Guthrie
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Examining Solutions to Expedite Broadband Permitting”
Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for bringing us together for this important hearing and thank you to the witnesses for your participation.

Two of my priorities as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee are closing the digital divide and maintaining America’s wireless leadership. Both of these goals require deploying infrastructure to connect unserved Americans, like many of my constituents in Kentucky’s Second District. Whether we are putting fiber into the ground or building the wireless networks needed to connect people in more remote areas, we must ensure that every American has the opportunity to participate in the 21st century digital economy.

Permitting continues to be one of the biggest obstacles to deploying this important infrastructure. Too often, broadband providers—from fiber companies to tower builders—are forced to delay their projects because of lengthy and cumbersome permitting processes that exist at every level of government.

Money and time that should be spent on deployment is instead wasted on navigating byzantine layers of red tape.

We must address these challenges to ensure that every American has access to connectivity.

The legislation before us today—almost 30 bills—will streamline broadband permitting processes and address a range of issues. These bills:

- implement shot clocks on state and local permitting reviews so providers have certainty on when they can expect decisions on their applications;
- cap excessive application fees so that money can be spent on construction instead of paperwork;
- exempt certain projects from redundant environmental and historic preservation reviews;
- encourage federal agencies to prioritize broadband applications; and
- provide transparency into the opaque federal permitting-review process.

I am proud of the work that members of this committee have done to advance these proposals. Enacting these bills will help us build the infrastructure needed to close the digital divide and further our technological leadership, and today we take the first step by obtaining expert feedback on the specifics.

Thank you again to the witnesses for your participation and I look forward to hearing from you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.