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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “The Role of Receivers in a Spectrum Scarce World”
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
November 29, 2012

Thank you, Chairman Walden, for convening this hearing and thanks to you and Chairman Upton for accommodating our Democratic leadership elections and changing our starting time.

I am pleased that this Subcommittee has engaged in a bipartisan effort to examine how we can help make more spectrum available for broadband. We have worked together to find new spectrum through incentive auctions and repurposing federal spectrum, and we have considered spectrum sharing options.

Today we add another element to the Subcommittee’s list and consider whether we can use spectrum more efficiently through better spectrum management and better technology.

We are fortunate that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are also committed to increasing the availability of spectrum. These agencies have proposed creative solutions – such as incentive auctions and sharing between federal and commercial users – in an effort to meet the country’s growing spectrum needs.

The FCC and NTIA have done an admirable job managing commercial and federal spectrum assignments and usage. They have resolved many interference issues by working with stakeholders and establishing rules of the road that achieve fair and technically sound results.

But our new spectrum challenges may require additional measures. As we look at the role radio receivers play in spectral efficiency, we should consider a framework to balance certainty in the spectrum management process while leaving room for innovation.

I am particularly interested in exploring what role Congress can play in this effort. We need to ensure that the FCC has a complete set of tools that will allow it to manage effectively increasingly crowded spectrum real estate.

We all want to see America remain the world leader in wireless devices, services, and innovation.

I look forward to hearing from our panelists and thank them for being here today.