

November 28, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Nadler
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Nadler and Pallone,

The undersigned organizations write to request you, as the current Ranking Members, and likely incoming Chairmen of the Judiciary and Energy & Commerce Committees, to announce your intent to hold hearings regarding the proposed merger between T-Mobile US (T-Mobile) and Sprint Corporation (Sprint). To date, the House of Representatives has yet to hold a hearing on the likely effects of the proposed transaction. We urge you to announce as soon as possible that you are scheduling hearings in the first quarter of 2019.

Representative Pallone, on April 30th you and Representative Doyle wrote to Chairman Walden and Chairman Blackburn requesting a hearing on the proposed Sprint/T-Mobile merger. You correctly pointed out that due to its “primary jurisdiction over the wireless industry, [the Energy and Commerce Committee has] a responsibility to understand the potential effect of this merger on consumers, workers, and the communications market.” You added that “the merger would create a new wireless behemoth by shrinking the number of nationwide wireless providers from four to three.” You went on to say that the Committee should explore the merged entity’s foreign ownership; whether 5G deployment is helped by the proposed merger, despite the fact that both T-Mobile and Sprint have invested in 5G already; and the state of wireless competition.

We agree. We hope you will now announce your intent to schedule exactly this kind of hearing.

Representative Nadler, in May of this year you stated on the House floor that the “decline of antitrust enforcement over the past several decades has been an economic catastrophe for millions of workers who have lost their jobs or have seen their wages lowered.” You added that the effects of weak antitrust enforcement are broader than just rising prices to consumers, but also include wage suppression, withering small businesses, and threats to our democracy.

Representative Cicilline called for, “cracking down on big corporate mergers that hurt consumers, workers, and competition” last July during the release of the “Better Deal” economic agenda.

We agree. Announcing hearings to examine the single largest pending wireless telecommunications merger, and one of the largest in the nation’s history, would be an excellent first step to implementing your vision for stronger antitrust enforcement, protecting consumers, promoting competition, and standing up for American workers.

We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

American Antitrust Institute
Center for Media Justice
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America
Consumer Reports
Fight for the Future
Free Press Action
The Greenlining Institute
National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low income clients
New America's Open Technology Institute
Open Markets Institute
Public Knowledge
Rural Wireless Association
Writers Guild of America West

cc: returning Members of the Committee on the Judiciary
 returning Members of the Committee on Energy & Commerce