



AMERICANS FOR RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

HR 3557 (Carter)

The American Broadband Deployment Act of 2023
and other pernicious wireless industry-sponsored bills (see over)

HR 3557 SUMMARY

This bill represents an unprecedented and dangerous pre-emption of local governments' authority to manage public rights-of-way and land use; it strips local governments of property rights and monetary compensation in favor of wireless telecommunications providers. The bill waives historic preservation (NHPA) and environmental (NEPA) rules. Yet in return for these gifts to the wireless industry, the bill imposes no obligations on them to provide broadband to "unserved" and "underserved" Americans.

WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE IS A LOCAL ISSUE

In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress wisely granted local authorities control over how wireless technology is deployed in their communities. HR 3557 takes that control away and gives it to the industry-controlled FCC instead. The FCC will now have authority over the placement of antennas in towns and villages across the country.

HR 3557 WILL NOT CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Let's be very clear about this: transmitting data wirelessly is an inferior technology not capable of providing the speed, security, low-cost and reliability required for full participation in the digital economy. Wireless is no substitute for high-quality fiber-optic, wired broadband connections.

Fast-tracking wireless connections will **not** close the digital divide. It will only perpetuate it. We don't need a second digital divide between those with access to high-speed internet and those stuck with wireless.

HR 3557 GUTS ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

Critical environmental and historic protections currently in place to protect our natural environment and historic areas from reckless and unwarranted placement of wireless antennas will be eliminated.



HR 3557 FORCES QUICK DECISIONS

Antenna applications are complex documents, filled with propagation maps, engineering drawings, electrical diagrams, equipment descriptions, simulation photos, traffic flow plans, insurance certificates and other items required by local codes. Each application and antenna location is unique, and proper analysis requires time and expertise.

HR 3557 forces local communities to quickly approve antenna applications; if time runs out, pending applications will be "deemed approved" and can be built, even without a permit.

HR 3557 IS UNNECESSARY

Wireless companies and site developers don't like local zoning laws. They claim local authorities are getting in the way of progress. But in most communities, antenna applications **are** being routinely approved and antennas are being installed. Local authorities are only trying to prevent the reckless and uncontrolled deployment of wireless antennas in their communities.

In addition to our opposition to the local pre-emption bill HR 3557, we oppose the passage of any bills that weaken rules and regulations governing the deployment of cell towers, antennas and related equipment in our national parks, historic monuments, and wilderness areas as well as outer space.

[HR 3293](#) and related bills expedite the deployment of cell towers, 5G antennas and related equipment in national parks, national forests, national monuments and other natural places preserved for the public, degrading the natural environment for commercial exploitation by telecoms. They call for a "strike force" to ensure quick approvals of applications, development of online portals to speed up application processing, and removal of "barriers" to rapid deployment of wireless infrastructure on all federal lands. Taxpayer dollars should not be spent cutting costs for private telecom providers.

[HR 1338](#) and related bills give the FCC authority and mandate to speed up deployment of thousands of additional telecom satellites in space, in violation of International Treaties and despite strong objections of astronomers and warnings from space experts regarding collisions and debris. The FCC has admitted it lacks any legal authority to authorize transmission satellites in space; this legislation papers over that lack of legal authority and allows space - which belongs to all people on earth - to be used for exploitation for private gain.

We also strongly oppose any legislation that purports to achieve "digital equity" by lowering speed specifications for broadband projects intended for minority communities.

[HR 3565 \(Title IX\)](#) and related bills re-define broadband as having speeds of 100 mbps down and 20 mbps up - the speed that can be attained through wireless connections. Essentially these bills condone the use of taxpayer dollars to provide slow, expensive, and unreliable broadband connections for minority communities in violation of the rights of those citizens to have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

