



The Honorable James L. Oberstar
 Chairman
 Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Mica
 Ranking Member
 Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
 United States House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2009

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica:

The nation's communications companies – facilities-based wireless broadband service providers, leading handset manufacturers, global infrastructure providers, and consumer electronic manufacturers – have been at the forefront of driving technological change that has led to growth in U.S. employment and productivity. Wireless communication services and broadband Internet access have become essential components for the increasingly mobile workforce. Innovative new products and services have also benefited consumers through enhanced connections with friends, family and business associates.

As wireless products have exploded in popularity and become integrated into our daily lives, there have often been social challenges that have required learning new etiquettes for use in particular situations. For example, the use of cell phones in restaurants, theaters or public transportation has required owners of these facilities to develop methods to manage these social concerns. Experience has shown that legislation to prohibit the use of voice operation was not necessary. Legislative prohibitions have correctly been limited to areas of public safety, such as requiring the use of hands-free equipment or prohibiting texting while driving.

Similar concerns are now being raised with regard to inflight passenger communication systems. These systems are currently being successfully launched in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Real world experiences with these commercial deployments have demonstrated that there are no safety concerns whatsoever, and the social issues are being effectively managed and are not proving to be a problem.

We believe it is not appropriate for Congress to require the FAA to prohibit the use of voice communications from mobile phones on aircraft. This is not an issue of passenger safety, and the social concerns can and should be addressed by means other than legislation, such as the regulatory process. We respectfully request that Congress not impose a flat ban on voice over wireless technology on aircraft, but rather ask for a study to consider the social issues raised by this use. This is not the time to deprive business and pleasure travelers of the many benefits of inflight communications, or to adopt measures that would result in the U.S. aviation and communications industries falling behind the rest of the world.

Sincerely,

Michael Petricone
 Sr. Vice President,
 Government Affairs, CEA

Jot Carpenter
 Vice President,
 Government Affairs, CTIA

Patricia A. Cooper
 President,
 SIA

Philip Bond
 President,
 Tech America

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CC:

Chairman Henry A. Waxman, Energy & Commerce Committee
 Ranking Member Joe Barton, Energy & Commerce Committee