



Press Release

Why the Federal Government Should Not Nationalize 5G

ALLISON EDWARDS | NOVEMBER 4, 2020

While 5G deployment by private companies is already underway in the United States, the Department of Defense — which holds crucial mid-band spectrum that can be used for 5G — is considering a national 5G network built by a single contractor. Such an effort by the government would both undermine current deployment efforts and be a marked shift from how the federal government has historically supported internet infrastructure, observes AAF’s Director of Technology and Innovation Policy Jennifer Huddleston. A nationalized approach to rolling out 5G would likely be slower and costlier than a market-based approach, Huddleston contends, and policymakers should instead support private deployment of 5G infrastructure by improving spectrum availability and utilization.

An excerpt:

Private sector companies are already engaged in providing 5G, and to shift to a government-run approach would have negative consequences. Any government effort would be well behind where private companies already are, leading to delays, at best, if 5G were to be nationalized. Further, a single-contractor approach is [likely to be costly to taxpayers](#) and would fail to achieve the same speed of deployment and increased connectivity that private investment would. As an example, Russia and other countries that took a centralized approach to rolling out 4G failed to achieve comparable results to the United States’ private-centric approach in the same timeframe.

[Read the analysis.](#)