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United States Senate

COMMITTEES:

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
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COMMISSION ON SECURITY
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October 30, 2020

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

**Re: AST&Science Application; SAT-PDR-20200413-00034/SAT-APL-20200727-00088/
(S3065)**

Dear Chairman Pai:

I write today with regard to an important FCC application submitted by AST&Science (AST) seeking market access approval to provide their SpaceMobile direct satellite-to-broadband cellular service in the United States. This technological advancement will allow American citizens to make broadband cellular calls by using a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellation that connects directly to existing smart phones and wireless devices regardless of where they are physically located.

This project is of particular importance to the state of Maryland, which covers a diverse range of environments including rural farmland, remote mountainous terrain, and extensive water regions, where access to cellular connectivity presents significant challenges. AST's SpaceMobile technology will fill the critical connectivity gap that so many Americans face, while also providing an important opportunity to accelerate 5G deployment to remote areas of the country where it is not feasible to install traditional cellular ground infrastructure. As we look to the future, advanced technology solutions like AST's SpaceMobile must be prioritized to meet increasing wireless connectivity demands of American citizens. We must also continue to encourage and facilitate the ingenuity of small businesses and Universities that are investing in the research, development and manufacturing of these critical next generation technologies here in the U.S.

I am particularly proud that AST's Space Lab is located in College Park, Maryland, that its Chief Scientist also serves as Director of the Space Power and Propulsion Lab at the University of Maryland, and that a number of graduates from the University of Maryland have assisted with the successful development of AST's breakthrough SpaceMobile technology.

I look forward to seeing SpaceMobile play an integral role in advancing the FCC's efforts to close our nation's connectivity gap and respectfully request that my comments be included in support of this important U.S. market access application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin L. Cardin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' and a long, sweeping underline.

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator