CTIA’s Statement on the 2008 Annual Mobile Wireless Competition Report

CTIA - The Wireless Association® President and CEO Steve Largent issued the following statement in response to the FCC’s release of the 2008 Annual Mobile Wireless Competition Report:

“We believe the Commission missed an opportunity today to truly highlight one of the few glowing examples of investment, innovation and consumer choice in the U.S. economy. While we understand that the Commission is not making any conclusion about the state of competition in the market, nor are they suggesting that the marketplace has changed to the detriment of consumers during 2008, we nonetheless are disappointed and confused as to why they’ve chosen not to make a finding of ‘effective competition’ for that year.

The Chairman has committed to a fact based, data driven Commission. We have embraced that and placed numerous facts, in the record, about each element of the wireless ecosystem. We believe, based on the facts submitted, that a determination of effective competition in the wireless marketplace is not only inescapable, but is actually quite simple – ask any American.

Whether based on HHI, the raw number of competitors in each market, investment, handset and network innovation, price or consumer choice, the U.S. wireless market is the envy of the world. That is why the lack of a finding is so troubling.

“In the same week that the European Commission releases its Digital Agenda for Europe, where they conclude that EU Information and Communications Technology research and development spending is 40 percent of the amount spent in the U.S., we believe that all policymakers should be celebrating, indeed applauding, the more than $44 billion that the wireless industry invested in networks and spectrum in 2008. That amount is significantly more than Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the U.K. invested – combined – in their wireless networks.

We understand and appreciate that the Commission has evolved the Report to reflect the reality of a ‘wireless ecosystem’ that CTIA has championed; indeed, an ecosystem in which competition and innovation have accelerated in the 18 months since 2008. Going forward, we will continue to place facts on the record at the FCC about this incredible, effectively competitive, ecosystem that is available and exploding in the United States, from carriers, to infrastructure providers, to handset manufacturers and content, application and operating system developers.

“We are very concerned, however, about the potential misuse of ‘policy levers’ that are referenced in the Report and believe that any attempt to add regulation to wireless as a result of this Report would be both misguided and harmful to consumers. We hope – and expect – that in the future, the Chairman and

Commissioners will take every opportunity not only to highlight all of the good that is flowing to consumers and the U.S. economy from this industry, but also to make policy decisions based on this incredible fact-based record."

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