

# What Others Are Saying: Left-of-Center Voices on 5G Interference Claims

Leading left-of-center voices have expressed dismay at the Federal Aviation Administration's objections to 5G deployment in C-Band spectrum, arguing their safety concerns are not valid, the way they were raised is not good government, and that the expert agency on spectrum – the Federal Communications Commission – should be trusted to chart the path forward

“ I would also say that I hope the NTIA is the agency that makes decisions on spectrum and that individual agencies like the FAA and DoD and others don't. You know, holding press conferences isn't the way to get this done so I hope that we can work that out too.”

**– House Communications Subcommittee Chairman Mike Doyle (D-PA)**

“ I've long believed that the FCC has and should continue to have ultimate responsibility for commercial spectrum policy and the NTIA should act as manager of the federal government's use of spectrum. When disputes arise, it should be the career experts at those agencies that work to forge a path forward. I encourage them to work together to ensure concerns are addressed in a way that will allow this valuable spectrum to be unleashed.”

**– Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA)**

“ The physics involved in this situation are well known. The mitigation techniques are well known. The standard-setting process is well known. The importance of getting 5G up and running while protecting flyers is well known. The Biden administration has prided itself on being science-based. The science here is pretty clear—it is hard to repeal the laws of physics. The real politick of this comes down to the costs of fixing the altimeters, just like the wheelchairs, hearing aids, and pacemakers were fixed. As the FCC engineers concluded, 'well-designed equipment should not ordinarily receive any significant interference (let alone harmful interference).'

**– Brookings Visiting Fellow and Former FCC Chair Tom Wheeler**

“ ...[T]he FAA, surprisingly released a bulletin claiming that there are possible effects on aircraft equipment from 5G rollouts. We were...at the point where the FCC had spent years looking at C-Band spectrum and haven't raised these issues. And they're saying now maybe some action is needed and they're slowing down the rollout of C-Band. And this is because of unfounded complaints from the aviation industry...I mean, China's not facing these issues. There's a bunch of other countries are using exactly the same spectrum. Our planes are flying into them. And the FAA's not doing anything about that.”

**– WIA President and Former FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein**

“...[T]he FAA knows safe altimeter operations are possible. Over a year ago, the current administrator said airlines would simply need some transition time to upgrade older equipment. And now they have had it. But the real issue, of course, isn't time. It's money, as airlines look for ways to avoid or delay upgrading older equipment – or make a case that taxpayers or someone else ought to pay. So, instead, they threaten fewer flights and use scare tactics about consumer safety as if public worries about air travel were a political hostage for them to use. An agency struggling to repair its “cowboy” reputation after waving through the 737 Max with hardly a second look owes the public more.”

**– Former Undersecretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs  
under President Bill Clinton Ev Ehrlich**

“[P]lanes having been flying in other countries using the same 5G spectrum, with no problem. Or as the #FAA wrote, ‘There have not yet been proven reports of harmful interference due to wireless broadband operations internationally.’”

**– Progressive Policy Institute Chief Economist Michael Mandel**

“We cannot have spectrum disputes between agency fought out in the press in ways that destabilize confidence in the safety of air travel. Federal policy at this level is not a game of chicken, and cannot be fought out like this in the press.”

**– Public Knowledge Senior Vice President Harold Feld**

“Anyone following me knows that I'm quite critical of the @FCC when they get things wrong. But the beginning of Harold's long take on C-BAND and @FAANews is spot on. Agencies like DOT and FAA act like whiny children when it comes to spectrum and need to be reigned in.”

**– Institute for Local Self-Reliance's Community Broadband Networks Initiative  
Director Christopher Mitchell**

“...[T]his suggests a serious dysfunction in federal spectrum management: agencies like FAA & DOT don't provide data and engage in FCC rulemaking process — then pop up 2-3 years late to claim ‘interference’ @SenCantwell @EnergyCommerce @oti @JRosenworcel @haroldfeld”

**– New America Foundation's Wireless Future Project Director Michael Calabrese**

“If the Biden Administration wants voters to view Democrats as the party of functioning government, it must do something about the kerfuffle between #FCC and #FAA over 5G spectrum and plane altimeters.”

**– Progressive Policy Institute Chief Economist Michael Mandel**