

FCC Widens Tech Crackdown to Humanoid Robots and Power Inverters

July 31, 2026

Pittsburgh, PA

Emerging Technologies Alert

(by [Justine Kasznica](#), [Susanna Bagdasarova](#) and [Morgan Hubbard](#))

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has significantly expanded its [Covered List](#) to include foreign-produced advanced robotic devices (including mobile robots such as humanoid and quadruped robots) and connected power inverters, effectively barring most new products in those categories from receiving equipment authorization for importation, marketing, or sale in the United States. On July 28, 2026, the FCC [announced the expansion](#), following formal national security determinations by a White House-convened Executive Branch interagency body which concluded that these categories of products “pose unacceptable risks to the national security of the United States or the safety and security of United States persons.”

The action marks another step in the federal government’s broader effort to secure critical technology supply chains supporting artificial intelligence (AI), advanced manufacturing, critical infrastructure, and the electric grid. It also signals that connected operational technologies, including autonomous robotic systems, are increasingly being regulated through the lens of national security rather than traditional product safety or communications regulation.

Importantly, the FCC emphasized that the action is prospective, meaning that it will not affect existing products. The immediate commercial impact is expected to fall primarily on future product introductions rather than equipment currently deployed in the marketplace. Manufacturers may seek approval for new products by demonstrating that a particular device or class of devices does not present the identified national security risks. Although details regarding the technical review process remain limited, manufacturers and companies developing or deploying robotics should anticipate significant regulatory scrutiny of their supply chains, robotic platform infrastructure, cybersecurity controls, and data handling practices.

The FCC’s inclusion of connected power inverters on the Covered List reflects similar concerns regarding the security risks posed by connected technologies in the energy sector. As inverter-based resources become more widely deployed across critical energy infrastructure, including in AI data centers, renewable energy projects, battery energy storage systems, and microgrids, federal regulators appear increasingly focused on reducing dependence on foreign-manufactured operational technology. The Executive Branch’s national security determination emphasized concerns regarding the growing role of inverter-based resources across the U.S. electric grid. The determination notes that internet-connected inverters may introduce vulnerabilities that could allow malicious actors to remotely disable or manipulate inverter operations, collect sensitive operational data, or facilitate unauthorized remote access and surveillance. Companies planning new energy infrastructure projects should evaluate procurement strategies, supplier relationships, and equipment specifications in light of these evolving restrictions.

Taken together, the FCC’s expansion of the Covered List reflects a broader shift toward regulating connected technologies through a national security lens. Companies across the robotics, AI, energy, and critical infrastructure sectors should monitor these developments closely and evaluate how evolving federal requirements may affect technology sourcing, supply chain strategies, and product development decisions.

Babst Calland attorneys are tracking the most pressing issues related to robotics, data center development, and energy projects. For questions or more information, please contact Justine Kasznica at (412) 394-6466 or jkasznica@babstcalland.com, Susanna Bagdasarova at (412) 394-5434 or sbagdasarova@babstcalland.com, or Morgan Hubbard at (412) 773-8717 or mhubbard@babstcalland.com.



PITTSBURGH, PA | CHARLESTON, WV | HARRISBURG, PA | LAKEWOOD, NY | STATE COLLEGE, PA | WASHINGTON, DC