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FCC CHAIRMAN KENNARD DETAILS REGULATOR'S 'BEST PRACTICES' FOR CREATING OPEN MARKETS

Washington, D.C. – William Kennard, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, today outlined the regulator's "best practices" for moving markets from monopoly to competition in a speech before the summer meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in Los Angeles, California.

In prepared remarks, Chairman Kennard hailed the federal-state partnership as a pro-competitive tool for opening markets and increasing access for all Americans. He said, "We have learned that when we link arms and give a voice to the voiceless, we speak with a powerful voice indeed. We have learned that when we are working in partnership, industry cannot exploit our differences. The hardest fights are about the haves and the have nots, when we are the only voice for the have nots. Regulators fight those battles alone, and they are the fights we are winning."

He detailed how the federal-state partnership has promoted competition and access in the telecommunications industry:

* Opening Up Monopolies The Commission worked closely with the commissions in New York and Texas to open up the local phone monopoly so that competitors in both those states now provide a significant portion of the local service.

* Delegating Powers We have delegated major authority over telephone slamming and numbering issues, so that more decisions that affect local citizens can be made locally.

* Creating the E-rate The pioneering work of the federal-state joint board drew the blueprint for the E-rate to wire schools and libraries to the Internet.

* Protecting Consumers Through Enforcement The FCC's Enforcement Bureau worked closely with the New York Public Service Commission on a major enforcement proceeding to demonstrate that we will not tolerate backsliding by local incumbent carriers who have agreed to open up their markets.

In closing, Kennard remarked, "We are all so very privileged, because for the rest of our lives, we will be able to look back on this period in history – this extraordinary period – and know that not only were we there, but we did the right thing. Not the convenient or the easy thing. But the right thing. We fought the tough fight. And we did it with our partners in the states."