

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL K. POWELL

Re: *Facilitating the Provision of Spectrum-Based Services to Rural Areas and Promoting Opportunities for Rural Telephone Companies to Provide Spectrum-Based Services* (rel. December 11, 2002).

Spectrum policy should not be a blunt instrument but a precision tool enabling us to facilitate as many services as possible to benefit the American people. As the work of the Spectrum Policy Task Force has made clear, the first step in wireless policymaking is to consider the spectrum environment in question – from the kind and number of users to the type of radios in use. Our flexibility should allow us to tailor a spectrum policy to the rural spectrum environment that takes advantage of each dimension of spectrum: space, frequency, power and time. By the questions we ask today, we hope to learn more about the unique characteristics of rural spectrum America. Does the lack of congestion create an opportunity for more relaxed technical rules? How do build out requirements affect deployment? Can we do more with an unlicensed service model? How well have partitioning and disaggregation worked to get rural spectrum into the hands of those who would use it? Are there other market-based mechanisms we can use to achieve these goals? Rural America has greatly benefited from the competition brought about by spectrum-based services. But those benefits have been achieved through nation-wide policy making. It is my hope and expectation that through a more tailored spectrum policy process we can deliver even greater benefits to rural consumers.