

## **Separate Statement of Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy**

*Re: Facilitating the Provisions of Spectrum-Based Services to Rural Areas and Promoting Opportunities for Rural Telephone Companies to Provide Spectrum-Based Services, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (WT Docket No. 03-202)*

This NPRM is the next step in our examination of how the FCC can amend its spectrum regulations and policies in order to promote the rapid and efficient deployment of spectrum-based services in rural areas. It follows many actions that we have taken in this area, including the recent adoption of an order creating a secondary market for spectrum and increasing the amount of spectrum available for use for unlicensed services, such as wi-fi.

Given the high value consumers place on the ability to communicate anywhere, anytime the Commission wants to ensure that we are promoting and encouraging the efficient utilization of spectrum in rural areas. Wireless services have become pervasive in many of our day-to-day lives as we rely on them for personal, business and safety reasons. Rural America has the same needs and the same demand for better, smarter, faster communications capabilities.

I am looking forward to reviewing the record in this proceeding to understand commenters' views on whether the proposals promote the deployment of efficient spectrum-based services to rural areas.