

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL**

Re: Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, GN Docket No. 07-45, Fifth Report

Since the Commission issued the *Fourth Report* on the availability of broadband services in 2004, this nation has made great strides in deploying advanced telecommunications services across America. This report reflects many of those advances. We are seeing impressive developments in new technologies using cable, copper, fiber, wireless, and satellite, that are giving Americans more choices and greater availability of advanced telecommunications services. The truth is, America continues to enjoy the most dynamic and robust Internet economy in the world. It's important to note that we achieved this success not by regulatory fiat, but by keeping regulations minimal, thus allowing entrepreneurs to flourish. Rigid command-and-control government mandates and arbitrary definitions and terminology would have inhibited creativity and growth, not fostered it. As we move forward toward the next generations of broadband technologies, it is important to remember this important lesson from history: government cannot out-guess the genius of free markets; nor should it try.

Nonetheless, we can only measure our progress with diverse and sound data. Currently, we use the data that the Commission receives through its broadband reporting requirements. In a companion item today, we are adopting more granular and expansive reporting requirements that should allow the Commission to render more comprehensive analyses of advances in the marketplace. However, this Commission, and all future commissions, should take great care to seek accurate and complete information that is useful to assess the state of broadband deployment. We must be mindful to let the data speak for itself and analyze it with a variety of methodologies. No one methodology can reveal the complete truth. Accordingly, we should remind ourselves often that the process of data collection and analysis is iterative and that we must constantly strive to improve our performance in this regard. Politics should play no part. Anything less will not move America further ahead in this important area.