

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

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

Broadband is revolutionizing how we communicate, how, where and when we work, how we educate our children, the delivery of healthcare and public safety as well as how we entertain ourselves. Broadband is particularly critical in rural and tribal areas, where advanced communications can shrink the distances that isolate remote communities.

I believe that the continued and complete deployment of broadband across this nation should be our number one focus, indeed Congress *requires* this: to provide incentives for investment in broadband facilities and encourage broadband deployment. To that end I have worked to remove legacy regulations to increase incentives for investment in new infrastructure, allowing services, applications and business plans to develop and proliferate in a less regulatory environment.

The 706 Report we release today shows that the U.S. remains the largest broadband market in the world, and finds continued dramatic growth in broadband deployment to over 100 million lines as of June 2007. For the full twelve-month period ending June 30, 2007, high speed lines increased 55% (or 37 million lines). Wireless devices, especially the latest generation devices, are increasingly used for Internet access. Just today the *New York*

Times reported on a study that found 84.8 percent of iPhone users access news and information from this handheld device, and 30.9 percent of iPhone users have tuned into a mobile TV or video clip. Given that sales of iPhones will soon reach 10 million, more and more people are utilizing these devices and with our spectrum auctions consumers will have even more choice.

High-speed deployments in rural communities also have continued to increase since the Commission's *Fourth Report*. Our data, as well as an NTCA report and OPASTCO survey, show there has been a significant increase in broadband availability in rural areas.

I am encouraged by the dozens of States and localities that are currently conducting or exploring initiatives in broadband deployment like Connect-Tennessee. They are on the ground, know the providers and needs of the communities better than us here in Washington D.C.- and we should enhance and not burden State and local efforts. To enhance cooperative federalism I join my State colleagues in suggesting reinvigorating the Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Services to serve as a vehicle for an ongoing dialogue between the Commission, state regulators, and local and regional entities regarding the deployment of broadband services.

In the future, I anticipate ever-greater demand for services and applications requiring greater bandwidth over an ever-expanding area. The record in this proceeding demonstrates that multiple industries are aggressively investing in and deploying services to meet this demand, expecting to make \$50 billion in capital expenditures in 2008 and 2009, enhancing consumer choice in both providers and services. I will continue to support policies that

encourage competition between broadband platform providers. Attempting to keep up with their competitors will drive higher speed technologies and service offerings to the U.S. broadband marketplace, not government regulation; and as a diversity of technologies mature coverage too will continue to become more ubiquitous.