

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

*Re: In the Matter of Amendment of Part 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Microwave for Wireless Backhaul and Other Uses and to Provide Additional Flexibility to Broadcast Auxiliary Service and Operational Fixed Microwave Licensees, WT Docket 10-153, Request for Interpretation of Section 101.141(a)(3) of the Commission's Rules Filed by Alcatel-Lucent, Inc., et al., WT Docket 09-106, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Filed by Wireless Strategies, Inc., WT Docket 07-121, Request for Temporary Waiver of Section 101.141(a)(3) of the Commission's Rules Filed by Fixed Wireless Communications Coalition.*

Today's action is yet another important step in implementing the National Broadband Plan. We are looking at ways to expand flexibility in spectrum use by removing barriers to the provision of wireless backhaul in certain bands. Backhaul is the life blood of a healthy and inventive wireless broadband market, providing the necessary bandwidth to get data between a cell tower and the network. As I noted in a statement at the Commission's last Open Meeting, spectrum is a finite resource. We can't make any more of it, so we need to find ways to optimize our supply by expanding flexibility of use for licensees and by improving efficiency through new and innovative technologies. With this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry, we take an encouraging step in that direction.

We have compiled and seriously considered a vast number of suggestions and proposals on wireless backhaul in crafting this item. I am hopeful that it will spark a robust dialogue on the best approaches to expand essential capacity and competitive choice in backhaul, which is currently a significant part of wireless networks' operating expense.

I am especially appreciative that this item gives particular focus to the economic and geographic impediments working to isolate large parts of *rural* America from the full potential of broadband. Many rural areas have few, if any, real options for fiber backhaul, and increasingly rely on wireless backhaul to deliver the capacity needed for broadband. Admittedly, some of the difficulties facing these areas may be the result—at least in part—of out-dated regulatory policies that limit flexibility and competitive choice. But in calling for a national broadband strategy, Congress directed us to ensure that *every* American has access to broadband capability—no matter who they are, where they live, or the particular circumstances of their individual lives. Through responsible reform efforts and inventive solutions like those proposed in this item, we can overcome these obstacles and ensure the broadband rights of all Americans.

I would like to Ruth Milkman and her entire team who worked to bring us such a thorough item for consideration. I look forward to working expeditiously with the Chairman and my colleagues as we continue working to maximize the public interest benefits of our precious spectrum resource.