

STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL

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.

I am delighted to vote to approve today's notice of proposed rulemaking and notice of inquiry seeking guidance on removing regulatory barriers to the use of spectrum for backhaul and other point-to-point and point-to-multipoint communications. By enabling the development of more flexible and cost-effective microwave services, the Commission will be poised to assist with increasing deployment of fourth-generation (4G) mobile broadband networks.

Last month's report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project reveals that American consumers are taking advantage of a much wider range of mobile services – taking pictures, web browsing, and playing music, to name a few. Of course this is even before the launch of 4G technologies. As the use of mobile data increases, providers will need to increase their backhaul capacity, including microwave backhaul, to accommodate that traffic. Increasing the availability of, and lowering barriers to entry for, microwave will serve as an additional choice for backhaul services.

This is an issue that I've been speaking about for some time now, most notably in November 2008 as part of the Commission's work on the TV white spaces proceeding, particularly in rural areas. I will continue to stay engaged on this issue, and look forward to learning more. In the meantime, I hope my colleagues agree that moving forward expeditiously in this proceeding, as well as in the white spaces proceeding, would be a win-win.