

REMARKS OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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Broadband Adoption and Usage - What Have We Learned?

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[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Many thanks to my good friend, Commissioner Clyburn, for her hard work as chair of the various joint boards. Your leadership for over three years is impressive and is very much appreciated. Thank you also to Commissioner Clyburn's legal advisor, Angie Kronenberg, for her tireless joint board work. Her diligence, intelligence, and commitment have served all of us well.

And, congratulations to my other distinguished friend and colleague, Commissioner Rosenworcel, for her new appointment as chair of all of these boards. You have very big shoes to fill, and I wish you all the best. I am confident that you will be highly successful, and I look forward to working with you.

Increasing our nation's broadband adoption rate and usage is a worthy and noble endeavor which can, does, and will improve the everyday lives of many, and I hope eventually *all* Americans. While over two-thirds of Americans currently subscribe to a broadband service, recent studies have also shown that America *is* moving in the right direction when it comes to finding ways to encourage broadband adoption. In fact, if we had asked ourselves in 2006, when I joined the Commission, which demographic groups would be among the early adopters of wireless broadband technologies, we probably would have guessed incorrectly. It ends up that school kids, the less well-off and minorities are leading the nation, and the world, in wireless broadband adoption. This encouraging progress is due largely to unfettered market forces. While government can play a role, that role should be to ensure it does not get in the way of these exciting developments.

Additionally, it is imperative that we look at the whole picture when we analyze our broadband adoption success. First, we should avoid simply focusing on whether individuals are broadband subscribers to a wireline service. Consumer broadband use goes well beyond cable modem and DSL connections. Increased use of wireless broadband is equally important in our country. To put this in perspective, between mid-year 2011 and mid-year 2012, the number of smartphones that were active on carriers' networks increased by 36.5% for a total of 130.8

million.¹ Also, during that same time period, the number of wireless-enabled tablets, laptops, netbooks and wireless broadband modems that were active on carriers' networks increased by 42%.² Second, and equally as pertinent, subscribership numbers do not take into account "non-subscribers" who are nevertheless active broadband users through the power of unlicensed services, such as Wi-Fi.

As we continue to analyze how to increase broadband use – across all sectors – we must continue to look to the private sector. Its leadership has been vital to America's deployment and adoption success, as will be discussed during the next panel. Through various initiatives, private risk capital has been invested diligently to increase adoption, especially for our school children, our low income communities and hard to reach places on tribal and Alaska Native lands. Thank you for your creative spirit, and I look forward to hearing what success stories can be replicated throughout our great nation.

¹ CTIA's Mid-Year 2012 Semi-Annual Wireless Survey at 10 (rel. Nov. 2012).

² *Id.*