

**Statement of FCC Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn**

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
*Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission*

March 12, 2013

Chairman Rockefeller, Senator Thune, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is good to be back, and I look forward to continuing to work with you and the new members in the years to come, particularly Senator Scott from the great state of South Carolina.

When I sat before you during our last hearing, I was under consideration for a second term on the FCC. Today I wish to thank you for your votes of confidence in January.

I plan to maintain a strong focus on consumer protection, the need for robust competition, and ways in which we can ensure that technology can advance key, national objectives. In doing so, I wish to stress what I see as the primary role of those sitting at this table, and for the providers we regulate.

Last week, I met with a Colorado broadcaster who summed it up perfectly. We are trustees, both communications providers and regulators alike, each serving this nation for a specific purpose. To the point, American consumers are in need of

and will always benefit from world-class technology and innovation that often comes from the private sector, but both must have assurances that the rules which govern this space are timely, clear, and fair. No matter the product or service, transparent rules must always be in place to protect all parties, ensuring that we all are able to enjoy the advantages and opportunities these communications technologies have to offer.

I believe we have worked hard to fulfill our side of this pact, with the Commission and industry successfully communicating on how best to advance universal service for voice and broadband, disabilities access to communications technologies and services, and better delivery systems in the area of public safety.

Take for example our current review of the FCC's media ownership rules. My office has held dozens of meetings with both broadcasters and our friends in the public interest community, who are both working to seek middle ground on a number of core issues important to each side. We want to get the rules right, and I am pleased that we are considering every possible option before making a final judgment. I have long warned that it would be imprudent and negligent to change any rule absent timely and comprehensive data regarding the impact on female and minority broadcasters and diverse broadcast programming, and I am pleased that at

least one organization has begun a study to that effect. As a steward of the public interest, I feel duty-bound to consider all the facts as we fulfill our statutory obligations.

The same can be said with regard to our roadmap for incentive auctions, and our laser focus on a process that can empower the mobile wireless and broadcast TV industries and provide sufficient funds to meet the public safety goals.

Chairman Genachowski has set forth a process that adheres to the statute you and your colleagues in the House sent us last year, and we intend to fully comply with the language and goals of the legislation. I will never lose sight of what I mentioned moments ago, that we are co-trustees, and as such, we will continue to work diligently with the broadcast industry and proceed in a way that carefully considers the concerns of all stakeholders.

We also will not stop focusing on improving access to broadband networks even in the most hard-to-serve areas of the nation, and the reforms of the Universal Service Fund programs have been a significant priority for the agency to advance that objective. While physical access is important, work is ongoing to promote the adoption and use of broadband. Congress directed us to do so in Section 706 of the Communications Act, along with our state commissions, and as my last act as Chair of our Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Services, we hosted a

summit in February to focus on the various adoption programs underway through the Recovery Act funds, as well as other public and private sector efforts.

We highlighted a number of successful projects and the latest academic thinking. What we have learned so far is that adoption has slowed in recent years, and those consumers who have yet to adopt have multiple reasons for not doing so. Cost remains a significant barrier, and convincing those who are non-digital natives to get online typically involves a trusted local partner, digital literacy training, and subsidized services and equipment if affordability is an issue. I am pleased that the Commission's Lifeline broadband pilot projects will lead to additional data for the Commission to study in order to further advance adoption, especially for low-income, senior and minority consumers. Moreover, I am encouraged by private sector efforts committed to increasing broadband adoption in disadvantaged communities. It is a matter of fairness, as one senior executive so aptly stated. These are the communities that can be helped the most by high-speed Internet access, and the public and private sectors should continue to work together in order to better address this imperative. As a nation, we can ill-afford to leave anyone behind.

I am, as always, eager to share your objectives with our hardworking staff at the FCC, and pledge to you that I will remain diligent and vigilant as a trustee of the American people. Thank you again for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.