

Remarks by Commissioner Mignon L. Clyburn
Re: *The Presentation on Universal Service Reform Implementation*
November 14, 2013

One of my proudest moments was being part of a bipartisan Commission that, after years of good faith efforts faltered, reformed and modernized universal service for the broadband era. Today's presentation highlights some of the significant benefits that the reforms are already unleashing for American consumers.

Soon, up to 600,000 housing units or over one million people in 44 states and Puerto Rico will have access to broadband for the first time due to the second round of funding from Phase I of the Connect American Fund. I have seen first-hand the enormous costs of communities off-line and know that having access to broadband will truly transform lives especially for those living in rural areas.

I'm also pleased to note the progress in the implementation of the Connect American Fund Phase II including the release of several new versions of the cost model and the outreach to help make the process and the model more transparent. This included three webinars with the states and the adoption of service obligations for price cap carriers that elect to receive support under Phase II.

Consumers are also seeing the benefits of increased mobile coverage as the Wireless Bureau continued to release funding for Mobility Fund Phase I and adopted the procedures for the Tribal Mobility Fund Phase I auction. These steps will clear a path for 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services on those Tribal lands that currently lack such advanced services today. I would like to thank the Office of Native Affairs and Policy for their close coordination with the Bureaus and for their ongoing efforts to ensure the Commission hears the views of Tribal Nations and Native communities.

We must continue to pursue reforms to encourage investment in rural America in order to achieve our goal of universal broadband while promoting efficient use of our finite universal service funds. Over the summer, the Bureau took a pause on the implementation of the regressions for rate-of-return carriers and I am hopeful that the additional time will be sufficient for crafting the rules going forward.

I've always said that we should remain open to pursuing course corrections where necessary to ensure that our rules are working as intended. Our reforms should be flexible enough to adapt to marketplace and technological changes so that America remains a leader in innovation in the digital age.

The accomplishments highlighted today were only made possible because of the tremendous work of those in the Wireline Competition and Wireless Telecommunications Bureaus, and the Office of Native Affairs and Policy with support from the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis, the Office of General Counsel, and Office of the Managing Director. I want to thank you for all your work particularly over these past six months. The American people also owe you a great deal of thanks as these efforts will have a tremendously powerful impact on their daily lives.