STATEMENT OF FCC CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER
NOVEMBER 14, 2013

Re: Commission Open Meeting Presentation on the FCC Speed Test App - Measuring
Broadband America

This past June, Google made headlines when it paid $1 billion to acquire a mapping software company called Waze. The five-year old startup's big innovation was to crowdsource traffic information. Users upload data to help other users ease their travel with information about delays, speed traps, and construction.

The FCC is taking that billion-dollar idea of harnessing user input – crowdsourcing – to help consumers navigate the mobile marketplace. We're releasing the FCC Speed Test App, which will allow consumers to run tests on their own smartphones to find out how fast their mobile network is where they live, work, and travel.

We know from experience that this type of transparency about broadband speeds is not only helpful to consumers on a day-to-day basis, but also that it can drive improvements in network performance. In August 2011, the FCC released our first Measuring Broadband America report, the first broad-scale study of actual home broadband performance throughout the United States. This report was based on information collected by the FCC's own household monitoring devices, a kind of Nielsen report for broadband. Collecting this information and making it available helped consumers make competitive choices. And we all know the power of competition in this case. The report created an incentive for lower-ranked Internet Service Providers to boost network performance.

The Speed Test mobile app is not just a tool for consumers; it's also a tool for the agency. I've said repeatedly that the Commission's decisions need to be based on facts, and the FCC Speed Test mobile app has the potential to create one of the richest data sets available on the true state of America's mobile networks.

The iteration of the FCC Speed Test mobile app being released today is just the beginning. This is the "public beta" version of the app. We want feedback from the public on how to improve it. But we also have our own plan of improvements.

For the initial launch, the app is available only on Android phones. We are planning on submitting an iPhone version to Apple for approval by the end of January. New releases of the app to address consumer feedback will follow early in 2014.

Our plan is to continue updating the app to provide more granular data, all subject to strict consumer privacy protections.

I have directed staff to set an aggressive schedule for providing visualizations and maps that will allow consumers to compare mobile broadband network speeds and technologies.

- In early 2014, a map on the FCC website will allow consumers to compare speeds and technologies in their regions. Also in the first quarter, as more data is collected, a higher

resolution map of the data will allow consumers to zoom into areas of cities to see variations of speed, latency, and lost packets.

- In the second quarter, higher resolution data should allow the FCC to provide more localized results, and comparisons by providers, networks, and mobile phone technologies.
- In the third quarter, focused info-graphics including such things as comparisons based on time of day, days of the week, combinations of data, and even a weather map of traffic will be added.

Ultimately, a crowdsourced app, and staff's ability to develop these maps and graphics with granularity, will depend on the participation of the crowds. We need consumers to download the app and upload data. I hope to see a virtuous cycle, as more users will make the app more valuable, which will attract even more users and so on.

Finally, a word about privacy. Privacy is paramount. To ensure consumer privacy protection, the FCC Speed Test app was developed in collaboration with a diverse team of privacy experts. No personal or uniquely identifiable information is collected. All data collected are anonymous, but in order to protect consumers, the data will be processed and analyzed statistically to ensure anonymity before any is released.

Thank you to CTIA and the four largest wireless carriers for their support throughout the development of the app. Thank you to Commission staff for their hard work on this project. We encourage everyone to download the app, and to give us feedback.