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For Immediate Release

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY
ON CIRCULATION OF LIFELINE EXPANSION ORDER**

WASHINGTON, March 8, 2016. — Hours after the Chairman launched his press campaign and multiple sources reported he had circulated this item, it has just landed in my inbox. I haven't had a chance to review all 150 pages yet, but as usual, the "Fact Sheet" released this morning raises more questions than answers. It's impossible to tell whether the "budget mechanism" is actually a budget in any real sense of the word. It is unclear what "Commission action" would take place when spending gets close to the amount specified – would the full Commission get a vote? And what is the rationale to justify increasing spending on this Universal Service program – but not others – by \$750 million, an increase of 50%? These are the answers I will be looking for as I review the Order. But since they are not actually given in the information made public so far, under the current rules I will be barred from discussing them. This fiasco seems to add fuel to my arguments for releasing the document to the public or at minimum to stop censoring Commissioners with rules that aren't being applied equally.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).