

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90; *Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund*, WT Docket No. 10-208

If the ultimate goal, once and for all, is to bridge the broadband divide, then a Mobility Fund, must be among the regulatory elements we erect. Ever since the FCC adopted its comprehensive universal service reforms in 2011, I have pushed for a long-term solution that a Mobility Fund Phase II auction could bring. And as recently as last month, I reiterated this view in an op-ed penned and published with Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

Mobility is one of our country's greatest gifts. This untethered means of being connected has unlocked new markets for commerce, been a public safety lifeline for millions and to sum it up most succinctly, has improved and transformed all of our lives. Mobile health monitoring options are bringing about better patient outcomes, and mobile hotspots are helping children who are not so privileged complete their homework.

Then, there is the promise of 5G.

It has been projected, that the proposed next generation of mobile standards, will add about \$2.7 trillion to U.S. GDP by 2030. But as we peer into a 5G future, we cannot lose sight of the fact that too many remain stuck in a 3G, 2G, or no-G world. When I visited Navajo Nation as part of my #ConnectingCommunities tour last year, I met Lucienda, a young lady who said that without the FCC's Lifeline Program, her community "would really be living back in the 1800s." Even 3G mobile broadband is a game-changer for Lucienda and many others, because low-income communities in this day and age, are disproportionately smart-phone dependent. Ensuring consistent mobile coverage for those who can barely afford that mobile handset—much less both a fixed and mobile connection—is a priority for me, as it should be for us all.

Solving these challenges will require a delicate mix of public and private dollars, along with many, many years of careful planning. We do right by rural America today, with the creation of a framework that will bring reasonably comparable mobile service to those who have been without.

And we do so through a multi-billion dollar effort, efficiently targeted via a reverse auction mechanism, that is carefully calibrated to preserve existing support where it is necessary, and expressly designed to build mobile broadband networks, where they are missing.

I am grateful to my colleagues for supporting my request to institute a challenge process that is not unduly burdensome on small providers. And, while we may not have all the elements in place today, we seek further comment on how best to structure a process that is both fair and balanced. While this will mean more work for the Commission staff, it is the right call and will yield the best results in the most expeditious way. I am likewise grateful, that one of the options my office suggested for the challenge process is contained in the Further Notice, but of course we remain open to further refinements and welcome other ideas, to ensure an optimal result.

I must again express how grateful I am to my colleagues for endorsing a slower phasedown of support for providers relying on legacy funding. It is only fair that we take rational business planning into account, and that we do nothing to run the risk of leaving any consumer without cell phone service.

Chairman Pai, I want to especially thank you and your staff, for working closely with my office, to address outstanding concerns and for accommodating our many edits.

Last, but certainly not least, to the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, your work on this item and your commitment to bringing mobile broadband to rural and Tribal communities across the nation deserves to be commended over and over again.

Thank you.