

**Remarks of FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee Fourth Meeting  
Washington, DC  
January 24, 2018**

Thank you, Elizabeth, and good morning everyone! Nearly one year ago, during BDAC's inaugural meeting, I urged this Committee to consider the needs and the capacity of low-income communities as you develop policy recommendations. I also reminded the Committee that all municipalities, areas, and communities are not created equal.

It was thus my hope that the BDAC's consensus-based approach would incorporate the concerns expressed by local government representatives of this Committee. While I am continuing to review each of the filed reports, I believe I must say it is regrettable that the concerns of localities do not appear to have been fully addressed.

Additionally, while I appreciate the BDAC's acknowledgement that public-private partnerships may provide solutions to bridge those divides, I noticed that there was an expressed preference for industry over municipalities in broadband deployment efforts. As I have said many, many times before, one size does not fit all, and private industry infrastructure investments do not always flow to communities that are most in need. Therefore, I will continue to ask for municipalities to be allowed to deploy a broadband network, if that best suits the needs of the people they are elected and appointed to serve.

Despite these concerns, I do welcome the inclusion of language in the committee's Model Codes for States and Municipalities that supports eliminating digital divides between urban and rural areas and allocating resources to drive broadband adoption. Your report can provide guidance to those who, for far too long, have been on the wrong side of the digital and opportunities divide. My hope is that these recommendations can help these communities help themselves. I agree with Congressman Peter Welch that the BDAC could be helpful in defining what it means to provide "reasonably comparable" service to rural areas.

One of the reasons we are so keen on closing existing divides is that connectivity allows for more robust access to public safety resources. Without widely-deployed networks, Americans would not be able to call 9-1-1 or receive wireless emergency alerts. But misuse of those vital public safety tools that Americans have come to trust is a serious matter.

The false ballistic missile alert in Hawaii on January 13, which created unnecessary levels of panic for more than 30 minutes, should be a wake-up call for all stakeholders involved in emergency communications. We cannot dismiss this incident as being just an inadvertent mistake that the public safety officials in Hawaii need to address. This incident should serve as a catalyst for communities in every state and locality to review their emergency alert processes. Every community should be doing more to prevent an issuance of a false alert; but if and when a false alert is ever sent again, the technical capability to immediately send a correction should be in place and the protocols on how to go about that should be clearly defined.

That false alert was also a reminder, that all relevant stakeholders must continue to improve public safety communications policies and procedures. Those stakeholders include communications companies, and state, local, and federal public safety communications officials, such as alert originators and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. But the stakeholders also include all five Commissioners at the FCC.

During my tenure at the FCC, there have been several proceedings in which the Commission adopted rules to improve public safety communications such as text-to-911, wireless location accuracy, and emergency alert systems. In most of these proceedings, the Commission set an ambitious goal to offer more advanced services to more people, and in many cases, industry has pushed back a bit. In each public safety proceeding, my approach has been guided by a few basic principles: people with accessibility challenges should benefit; all consumers should be educated about the public safety benefits; and collaboration among all stakeholders -- well that works better than litigation.

Next week's open meeting, at the FCC, includes an Order to enhance Wireless Emergency Alerts. The draft Order proposes rules to improve the geo-targeting of these alerts. One of the challenges in that proceeding, is how the Commission should address the fact that most wireless carriers who provide these alerts, even nationwide carriers, have areas in their networks where they cannot transmit the alert, because of a weak mobile broadband signal.

Some of the wireless carriers believe the Commission should allow them to use a less accurate approach. Other parties want those carriers held to that higher standard. My approach to addressing this challenge, will involve all of those principles I just mentioned.

But the challenge of more precise wireless alerts, is why the work of this advisory committee is so important. By working to promote greater deployment of broadband, all of you improve the possibility that more consumers will receive alerts that can keep them and their loved ones safe during the time of an emergency. I commend your efforts, and wish to again thank you, for your service.