

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Streamlining Licensing Procedures for Small Satellites*, IB Docket No. 18-86, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (April 17, 2018)

Welcome to the second space age. During the first, which began with the end of the Second World War, space missions depended on the prowess of our superpowers. This was for good reason—going to space was out-of-this world expensive. Missions were awe-inspiring but rare. But this new space age is different. It relies on radically new technologies and business models. It features a much wider range of space interests and actors. Satellites are smaller, crowd-funded constellations are possible, and space tourism is no longer simply a dream. In short, we have so many more reasons to reach for the stars.

So today we take steps to tailor our licensing framework for this new era. That's important. Across the board, we need to do more to prepare for the proliferation of satellites headed to higher altitudes. To this end, in this rulemaking we seek comment on an alternative application process for small satellites, ask questions about on-orbit lifetime, and explore issues of maneuverability and trackability. We also seek comment on new frequencies for new constellations of small satellites.

I look forward to the record that develops. But to be truly prepared for the second space age I think there are two additional issues that deserve our attention now.

First, the FCC needs to tackle the growing challenge of orbital debris. At present, the risk of debris-generating collisions is reasonably low. Still, some satellite collisions have happened. As more actors participate in the space industry with larger satellite constellations, the frequency of these accidents is going to increase. Unchecked, growing debris in orbit could make some regions of space unusable for decades to come. That's not an acceptable outcome. It's why we need—right now—to develop a comprehensive policy to mitigate collision risks and ensure space sustainability.

Second, the FCC needs to coordinate more closely with other federal authorities to figure out just what our national policies are for this jumble of new space activity. Right now, the National Space Council is considering policy changes to help promote the growth of the commercial space industry. Their efforts encompass everything from streamlining licenses to reforming export controls to protecting airwaves facilitating space activities. Its membership spans the civil, military, and commercial sectors, including the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of Homeland Security, and Director of National Intelligence. Representatives from the Office of Management and Budget, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others, also serve on this council. It's an impressive list. But the FCC should have a seat at this table. It's a glaring omission that the agency does not because through our oversight of the airwaves and licensing of satellite services we have an important role ensuring the viability of space for future generations. Cutting the FCC out of this discussion is an unseemly mistake—and one that deserves a fix.