

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Amendment of Part 74 of the Commission's Rules Regarding FM Translator Interference*, MB Docket No. 19-40.

Licensing use of the public airwaves and mitigating interference between operators are responsibilities that this Commission was founded upon. After all, these airwaves are a scarce and valuable public resource that allow us to communicate with one another wherever we may be—through broadcasting, radio communications, mobile wireless service, and more—and interference can cause grave problems for listeners and stations alike.

When it comes to radio, we have our work cut out for us. Commercial radio broadcasting launched in the U.S. in 1920 with a handful of stations across the country. Today, nearly 100 years later, AM/FM radio reaches 93 percent of us every week—greater reach than any other communications technology. Each week, hundreds of millions of Americans tune in to radio signals broadcast by more than 25,000 AM, FM, LPFM stations or translators. This impressive blanket of broadcasting allows communities across the country to access news, information, and entertainment, and receive critical emergency alerts in times of trouble. The success of our broadcasting system is due in no small measure to underappreciated advances in technology and vigilant licensing and engineering work by this Commission.

New technology or new policies can bring new opportunities but also new challenges. Here we grapple with how to handle interference concerns related to a recent influx of translators. Although translators receive only secondary protection, they are crucial parts of our radio landscape that allow signals to reach distant communities and navigate tricky terrain. This item considers the robust record to try to balance interference concerns with the need for both stations and translators to continue to provide service to listeners. While we must remain vigilant and ensure that these rules work as intended, I believe that this item largely succeeds in finding such a balance and I support it.

Many thanks to the talented staff of the Media Bureau for your hard work on this item.