

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL
APPROVING IN PART, DISSENTING IN PART**

Re: *Incentive Auction of Upper Microwave Flexible Use Service Licenses in the Upper 37 GHz, 39 GHz, and 47 GHz Bands for Next-Generation Wireless Services*, AU Docket No. 19-59

Sixteen countries have already auctioned spectrum specifically for the provision of 5G wireless services. They include Australia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. In addition, China allocated spectrum for 5G use last year.

If you comb through these efforts, one detail stands out. Every country on this list has made mid-band spectrum available for their early 5G deployments. Every single one.

But in the United States we have yet to auction a single swath of mid-band spectrum. We have brought exactly zero megahertz of mid-band airwaves to auction in the 5G age. Instead, we have focused all our early efforts on high-band spectrum. In fact, this agency auctioned two millimeter wave bands earlier this year and courtesy of today's action, plans to auction another three millimeter wave bands later this year—a total of five different bands newly available for 5G service. But when it comes to the mid-band spectrum the rest of the world has used for early 5G efforts? We've auctioned nil.

It is increasingly apparent that the United States is alone in its mission to make millimeter wave the core of its domestic 5G approach. If we continue on this path—prioritizing high-band airwaves—we are going to have a serious problem. We will find ourselves on the sidelines as mid-band spectrum becomes the core of worldwide 5G service. This means less scale, higher costs, interoperability challenges, and less security as other nations' technologies proliferate. Moreover, recent commercial launches of 5G service in the United States are confirming what we already know—that commercializing the millimeter wave will not be easy, given its propagation challenges. The network densification these airwaves require is costly. If we want to serve everywhere in the country—and not create communities of 5G haves and have-nots—we need a healthy mix of airwaves that provide both coverage and capacity, and we require them now. That means we need mid-band spectrum. It's especially important for rural America, where the challenging economics of service presently do not support the high cost of high-band infrastructure.

The fact is we have ceded international leadership when it comes to 5G because of this dearth of mid-band spectrum. A recent report issued by the Defense Innovation Board, the United States military's premier advisory group of academic researchers and private sector technology companies, surveyed the state of the 5G landscape and warned that the country that leads in 5G is “not likely to be the United States.”

That does not sound good. Our back of the pack approach to mid-band spectrum is leading us down the wrong road in the race to 5G. We need to change course stat.

We need a mid-band auction now. I am hardly alone in making this call. You can find it in every report issued about our 5G progress, in comments filed in every spectrum proceeding at this agency, and in countless inquiries from Capitol Hill. So it begs the question—why is this agency doubling down today on yet another high-band auction? The truth is we could schedule a mid-band auction of the 3.5 GHz band right here and right now—and we should.

So while I support today's decision to put on the calendar an auction of the 37, 39, and 47 GHz bands, I think holding this auction before bringing mid-band spectrum to market is misguided. So I will approve in part and dissent in part.

I sincerely hope that this agency can flip its priorities and refocus on mid-band airwaves. The rest of the world is leaving us behind. It's time to reclaim the leadership we have lost and make real progress with the deployment of 5G service to every community, everywhere across the country.