

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *All-Digital AM Broadcasting*, MB Docket No. 19-311; *Revitalization of the AM Radio Service*, MB Docket No. 13-249.

All of the state broadcaster events that I've attended over the years have taught me much about the industry and the great service broadcasters provide in their local communities. The Texas Association of Broadcasters event was no different, except maybe just a tad bit bigger. While visiting their annual trade show in Austin last summer, I had the distinct honor of participating in an armchair conversation with Bryan Broadcasting Corporation's very own Ben Downs, during which we discussed many issues confronting the broadcasting industry, including AM Revitalization. For anyone who knows this issue, Ben is one of the original — if not first — proponents of optional digital AM and one of its staunchest advocates. Naturally, one of the topics that came up during our discussion was this very issue, which I supported at the time, so it gives me distinct pleasure to see it brought before the Commission for consideration today.

Assuming this item goes to final order, it remains to be seen whether digital AM signals will ever catch on with manufacturers, and more importantly, listeners, or serve as a significant factor in the band's revitalization, but our record clearly demonstrates that many in the industry would very much like to at least have a chance to test this approach, without having to obtain an experimental license. We need to give them that opportunity. When it comes to adopting specific technical standards, I do continue to have serious reservations regarding this approach, as the Commission also adopted specific standards in the early 2000s. That said, on this and other questions, I will follow the comments received closely and look forward to seeing whether the option to transition to all-digital modes does, in fact, allow stations to have a greater and more effective reach among the listening public.

I thank the Chairman for his continued attention to this initiative and approve of this item.