

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Unlicensed White Spaces Device Operations in the Television Bands*, ET Docket No. 20-36.

Deploying high-speed broadband service throughout rural America has been a major challenge for some time. I support this item because it proposes actions that, if adopted, would increase our options for ensuring the availability of broadband data and other services in rural America.

Operating in the unused white space between TV stations presents a valuable opportunity that could significantly change the wireless communications landscape. Technologies and devices being developed for use in this spectrum hold the promise of increasing our broadband capacity and our ability to use limited spectrum resources more efficiently and effectively.

Devices that operate in unlicensed white spaces in the TV bands take advantage of the better propagation characteristics of lower band frequencies to enable broadband data and other services in rural and other hard-to-reach areas. Last year, this Commission took steps to enable more white space device use by adopting measures to improve the accuracy and reliability of data necessary to determine available spectrum for fixed device use, thereby minimizing interference with protected services operating in the TV bands. We also modified the white space device antenna height rules to allow improved broadband coverage in rural areas.¹ Today's action seeks to build upon those improvements by seeking comment on thoughtful industry proposals that could further increase options for unlicensed white space devices to operate in a manner that better serves unmet broadband coverage needs, without causing undue interference to broadcasters and other protected users operating in the same spectrum.

This item poses the right questions, seeking comment on how best to protect other operators in the TV bands, and proposing measures such as increased exclusion zone distances to protect against harmful interference.

I look forward to reviewing the record in this proceeding. Thank you to the Office of Engineering and Technology staff who prepared this item for our consideration.

¹ See *Amendment of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules for Unlicensed White Space Devices, Amendment of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules for Unlicensed Operations in the Television Bands, Repurposed 600 MHz Band, 600 MHz Guard Bands and Duplex Gap, and Channel 37, Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auctions*, ET Docket Nos. 16-56 and 14-165, GN Docket No. 12-268, Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, 34 FCC Rcd 1827 (2019).