KEYNOTE REMARKS OF FCC COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR

AT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION ONLINE EVENT ON ATSC 3.0

"BROADCAST INTERNET: THE FUTURE OF ATSC 3.0"

THE INTERNET

MAY 18, 2020

It is great to join everyone for this online event. If nothing else, knowing that I would be seeing you all today, even just virtually, provided some extra motivation for me to take a shower this morning, put the sweatpants to the side, and brush the one hair I have left on my head.

In all seriousness, though, I want to thank the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Communications Technology Association (CTA) for hosting today's event. These organizations and their member companies are doing tremendous work to advance U.S. leadership in the communications and technology sectors.

I want to talk today about one area in particular where these associations have worked closely together for the benefit of the American public—and that is on the development of the new and innovative broadcast transmission standard called "ATSC 3.0." While that very technical sounding term does not exactly roll off the tongue, there's no denying that this is a big deal. So I am pleased to use this event to break the news about a draft decision I've taken the lead on at the FCC and that we will vote on at our June Open Meeting. As I will outline today, this decision could provide another boost to this new broadcast technology. And with that as the teaser, here comes the medicine. So stay tuned!

I gave a speech on ATSC 3.0 over a year ago now at the NAB Show in Las Vegas.[1] Back then, much of the attention on this standard focused on the wide-range of NEXTGEN TV applications it can enable—everything from bringing Ultra HD video to the airwaves to ushering in a more interactive, accessible, and personalized experience for the viewing public. Those exciting NEXTGEN TV applications only tell part of the story. So the main point of my 2019 speech was to draw attention to an entirely different set of ATSC 3.0 applications. I suggested that we should think about this technology as a new and competitive broadband pipe. After all, the technology can leverage the power and coverage of broadcast transmissions to deliver a 25 Mbps data stream to Americans. That's why I now refer to one set of ATSC 3.0 offerings as "Broadcast Internet" services. I think that term captures even more of the innovative applications we're talking about.

These new Broadcast Internet offerings are part of a broader trend we're seeing in communications. From innovative 5G offerings to high-capacity fixed services, providers from previously distinct sectors are competing like never before to offer high-speed Internet services through a mix of different technologies. ATSC 3.0 is the technology that will allow broadcast spectrum to play an even greater role in this converged market for connectivity.

As our networks continue to mature, they won't always rely on the same spectrum bands for inbound and outbound data paths. Instead, hybrid networks will look for the most efficient and cost-

[1] Remarks of FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr at The National Association of Broadcasters Show, ATSC 3.0: A New Broadband Pipe (Apr. 8, 2019), https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-356909A1.pdf.

effective ways to deliver content to users. This is where broadcast spectrum, delivering Broadcast Internet services, can leverage its inherent strengths to compete in this market. Those strengths include wide-area coverage over low-band spectrum and an efficient one-to-many architecture.

Since I spoke at that NAB show in 2019, even more Broadcast Internet services have been developed. In January of this year, which admittedly feels more like four years ago than four months ago, I saw some of those innovations on the show floor at CTA's main event—the Consumer Electronics Show.

Take autonomous vehicles, which is just one area where Broadcast Internet services could play a pivotal role. It could send out targeted map and traffic data or provide large, fleet-wide software updates—quickly and efficiently.

For IoT, smart ag, and telemedicine applications, Broadcast Internet's low-band spectrum could provide an efficient means of communicating with devices over wide areas.

For 5G, it could help augment coverage or add capacity by shifting data off cellular networks.

And for many Americans, this means that they could soon have another option for high-speed downloads—from movies to applications—delivered over the same spectrum that they've long used for over-the-air television.

Plus, as we look to push more and more data to the edge of the network, Broadcast Internet services could provide one way of moving that data in an efficient and cost-effective manner. And given that a Broadcast Internet signal can offer high-speed downloads, consumers could see reduced costs for Internet services, and its propagation characteristics make it well suited for underserved rural communities.

At the Commission, we have been doing our part to facilitate deployment of ATSC 3.0. Over the objections of some, we authorized broadcasters to transition voluntarily to ATSC 3.0 offerings in 2017 so they could test the market and explore the possibilities of this new technology. Since then, the Media Bureau has worked collaboratively with broadcasters to address many of the technical and licensing issues that have come up. And we recently initiated a proceeding to expand the use of single frequency networks, which will ultimately help ATSC 3.0 reach its full potential, whether we are talking NEXTGEN TV or Broadcast Internet services.

This approach has worked. Broadcasters are making great progress in their NEXTGEN TV offerings—thanks in large part to the efforts and investments of the panelists you'll be hearing from next—and many are already exploring ways to support Broadcast Internet services.

But I think there is more we can do to green light Broadcast Internet offerings and encourage even more investment in these services. That is why I have been working with the Media Bureau on an item that will further unlock the potential of broadcast spectrum, empower innovation, and create significant value for broadcasters and the American public alike. The draft would do so by removing the uncertainty cast by media regulations that were drafted for an entirely different set of broadcast TV services.

Here's what the item will do if, adopted:

First, in a Declaratory Ruling, we would ensure that Broadcast Internet services are not weighed down by legacy media regulations. We would do this by clarifying that the Commission's broadcast

television station ownership rules do not apply to leasing arrangements between broadcasters and third parties for the provision of Broadcast Internet services. It has been over two decades since the Commission last addressed these issues in the context of ATSC 1.0, long before almost anyone could have imagined the exciting new use cases made possible by ATSC 3.0 and the leasing agreements that would be needed to facilitate those uses. It is critical that we provide certainty to broadcasters, investors, tech companies, and innovators that these agreements will not be subject to dated rules designed to regulate television stations—not autonomous vehicles or telemedicine applications. With this clarification, we expect to see additional investment in broadcasters, which will help them invest in news gathering and better serve their local communities. And given how much advertising revenue has been diverted to the Internet, it's fitting, I think, that broadcasters could now strengthen their own standing with Broadcast Internet offerings.

In practice, here's what this decision would mean: It would allow a broadcaster or any other entity to enter into lease agreements with multiple broadcasters in a single geographic market for purposes of offering Broadcast Internet services without triggering the Commission's attribution or ownership rules for television stations. This decision would help ensure that broadcasters and other innovators have the flexibility to generate the scale and geographic footprint—both locally and nationally—that may be necessary to support certain Broadcast Internet services without being subject to regulations unrelated to the provision of such services.

Next, in an accompanying Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, we would seek comment on whether to clarify or modify our existing rules to further promote the deployment of Broadcast Internet services. For instance, the Notice would ask whether changes to our licensing structure would provide even greater certainty for investment in Broadcast Internet offerings and whether other technical rules need to be updated to reflect the enhanced capabilities of ATSC 3.0.

Ultimately, it is critical that we identify and remove the overhang of unnecessary government regulations that would otherwise hold back the introduction and growth of new competitive offerings. We want the marketplace—not outdated rules—to determine whether new services will succeed. This new proceeding is an important step in that direction, but it certainly won't be the last.

So, thank you again to NAB and CTA for hosting me. I am glad to offer this peak into one of the FCC's June Open Meeting items. And I look forward to taking some questions.