

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

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

Blue Mountain is a ridgeline that rises about a thousand feet above the farms and small towns that are spread across Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley. Up on top of the ridge, a few miles outside Carlyle, sits an old AT&T long line tower. It's a roughly five-story concrete structure first built in the 1940s. If you climb up to the top of that tower, the dusty and creaking ladders along the way serve as a constant reminder of its age. But it was cutting edge back in the day—part of the then high-tech network of microwave towers that connected the East and West Coasts of the country.

Today, a fixed wireless provider, CTI Networks, is putting this old infrastructure to a new use. Like many WISPs, CTI is a small and scrappy company. I met its owner, Allen, at the tower last week, and from up on top he pointed out all the farms and homes in the valley below that had been stuck with only slow DSL service for far too long. That is now changing. Allen has attached a couple of small antennas to the tower that are now beaming high-speed wireless service to these underserved communities.

I've seen essentially the same story play out in rural areas throughout the country, where WISPs are working tirelessly to provide life-changing Internet service to communities that have been left behind.

Stories like these are precisely why today's item is such a big win for consumers in these hard-to-reach communities. Fixed wireless services will continue to play an important role in the FCC's efforts to increase connectivity, and it is critical that we expand opportunities for white space devices, particularly in rural America. We can make even more progress towards closing the digital divide while empowering rural communities through high-speed wireless connections.

A big reason we are here today is because stakeholders got together, compromised, and identified a path forward. This item is a testament to their efforts, and I am hopeful that our action today will help accelerate fixed wireless builds in rural communities that find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide.

I want to thank the Office of Engineering and Technology for its work on the item. It has my support.