

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

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

Millions of Americans live in areas without any form of broadband service. The Commission has long sought to promote the use of white spaces as a broadband service option for these communities. Today's decision is a good step towards finally realizing the full potential of this important technology.

The rule changes adopted today reflect a commonsense agreement between the white space community and broadcasters that will allow for more robust service and efficient spectral use, particularly in rural areas, without increasing the risk of harmful interference to television broadcasters or other authorized services. With better access to broadband service, rural and Tribal communities will be able to strengthen their local economies, receive higher quality telehealth services, successfully participate in distance learning, and securely work from home during and after this pandemic.

I'm particularly pleased about how our new rules will expand the mobile use of white space devices. With the higher power levels authorized today, mobile devices will allow farmers to better manage their crops and livestock through precision agriculture. Additionally, mobile white space devices will be able to operate as school bus hotspots and allow children in rural areas without broadband at home to complete homework on their long bus rides to and from school.

I'm also looking forward to seeing how narrowband IoT devices will take advantage of the propagation characteristics of the low-band white spaces spectrum to enable new and innovative uses in the agriculture, mining, and environmental monitoring sectors. The rule changes we adopt today maintain a low risk of harmful interference while expanding the opportunities for IoT applications in rural environments.

Finally, I appreciate that the order reflects changes suggested by me and my colleagues, including seeking further comment on the use of terrain-based models to protect services in the TV bands. While there may still be questions about how these models would work in the white spaces context, they deserve further consideration because they reflect real-world conditions and are used for other bands. I look forward to reviewing the comments on these issues.

Thank you to the Office of Engineering and Technology for their work on this item.