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For Immediate Release

Carr Supports Action for Apparent Abuses of FCC’s Educational Service Rules

WASHINGTON, DC, January 7, 2021—FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr issued the following statement regarding the release of nine Notices of Apparent Liability proposing over \$47 million in forfeitures for apparent violation of the FCC’s rules governing Educational Broadband Service licensees:

“Years ago, the FCC allowed a handful of nationwide organizations to obtain valuable public spectrum—for free—in exchange for putting those airwaves to use for the benefit of school systems and their students. The FCC’s rules were clear. Their purposes designed to support the educational missions that our nation’s schools and teachers are dedicated to promoting. And the licensees in this Educational Broadband Service (EBS) took on the responsibility of faithfully delivering on their important obligations.

“In 2019, I launched an investigation to determine whether these organizations have lived up to their responsibilities under the FCC’s rules. I discovered that many of these national organizations were using these valuable public airwaves for activities far removed from kids and schools. They were reaping millions of dollars in financial benefits from this free spectrum while apparently failing to meet their obligations under the law. In at least several cases, they were essentially liquidating the spectrum and spending the cash on pet projects.

“Later that year, the full Commission voted to direct the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau to investigate the allegations of misconduct and to take appropriate action based on their findings.

“As a result of the Enforcement Bureau’s diligent investigation, the Chairman circulated Notices of Apparent Liability against nine EBS licensees last fall. As those Notices detail, the licensees have apparently failed to comply with a series of FCC rules. So the Commission’s approval of those Notices today marks an important step in the FCC’s work to hold licensees accountable for fulfilling the public interest obligations that were an integral part of their authorizations.

“I want to thank the staff of the Enforcement Bureau for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to the FCC continuing its efforts to hold these licensees accountable to the educational commitments that they made.”

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