

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Facilitating Shared Use in the 3100-3550 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 19-348

In the age of the smartphone, demand for wireless service continues to grow at an exponential pace. 5G and the applications stemming from it are changing the way we work, protecting our health and safety, and creating new opportunities for communication, education, and entertainment. While consumer demand for mobile wireless service has played a central role in that growth, there are other factors driving growth as well—like the city installing routers on its buses to provide free Wi-Fi to passengers, the business placing sensors throughout its facilities to track its inventory, or the rural school district tapping into unused spectrum so that its students can learn remotely.

Mid-band spectrum is critical to that future, and I'm pleased that today's Report & Order will make another 100 megahertz of this spectrum available for 5G and other advanced wireless services. Unrestricted access to the 3.45 GHz band will both accelerate U.S. leadership in next-generation wireless networks and harmonize the U.S. band with international 5G use. Robust, full-power 5G deployment using mid-band spectrum can also help address internet inequality problems by providing high-quality connections to people who live outside the most densely populated urban centers.

The results of the recent C-Band auction demonstrate the ample demand for this spectrum. That auction raised over \$80 billion and affirmed my insistence that the proceeds go to the American taxpayer, rather than foreign satellite operators. I'm happy about the C-Band auction's financial success. I'm hopeful that the 3.45 GHz auction will both raise substantial funds and generate a significantly diverse group of winners. Thus, I appreciate that my colleagues agreed with my request to reduce the size of the spectrum blocks in the band to 10 megahertz. This change – coupled with the 40 megahertz spectrum aggregation limit – should increase competition, encourage more efficient bidding, and create opportunities for smaller bidders, particularly the rural and regional carriers that are critical to bringing advanced services to our hardest-to-reach communities.

I'm also grateful that the Report & Order includes measures to protect other licensees from harmful interference. For example, the item's out-of-band emissions limits and good-faith negotiation requirement for TDD synchronization should protect operations in the adjacent CBRS band. I will be observing those negotiations closely, as well as the cooperation efforts between commercial licensees and the Department of Defense contractors who currently operate in this band under part 5 experimental licenses.

Overall, the draft strikes a reasonable balance given the statutory language in the Beat CHINA for 5G Act, which requires that we commence this auction before the end of the year and affirms the existing requirement that we must raise 110 percent of the federal government's relocation or sharing costs. Without those restrictions, I would have given greater consideration to opportunistic use in the band, which could have amplified and reinforced the innovative benefits of the 3.45 GHz band. As we have seen in the CBRS band, opportunistic use facilitates more intensive spectrum use by allowing smaller entities to benefit from unused spectrum in a quick and cost-effective manner, particularly in rural areas that are often the last to see licensed deployments. Nevertheless, I'm pleased that my colleagues agreed to include language highlighting the benefits of opportunistic use, and I hope to see consideration of this approach in future spectrum proceedings.

I recognize that Commission staff faced difficult restrictions in drafting this Report & Order, and I want to acknowledge and applaud their hard work on this proceeding. I will vote to approve this item

and its companion Public Notice, and look forward to building on its efforts to provide opportunities for small and rural licensees in the 3 GHz band and elsewhere.

Thank you to the staff in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Office of Engineering and Technology for their work on this item.