

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Connect America Fund, et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, No. 14-58, 09-197, 16-271, RM-11868, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (May 19, 2022).

We're on a mission to connect everyone, everywhere in this country to high-speed broadband. We've got new tools to do it courtesy of new laws like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and new initiatives like the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program. But the old tools matter, too. One of the most consequential you'll find is in Section 254 of the Communications Act. It charges the Federal Communications Commission with supporting communications networks in "rural, insular, and high cost areas."

A lot turns on that phrase. It is the foundation of FCC universal service programs that help deliver communications services to remote communities across the country. That brings us to the Alternative Connect America Cost Model, known as A-CAM. This is a universal service program that the FCC developed for rate-of-return carriers serving high-cost and hard-to-reach areas. It provides a fixed amount of funding in return for commitments to build broadband. It has led to fiber facilities deeper in the networks of carriers serving these rural communities—bringing higher speeds and greater bandwidth to consumers.

But like all good programs, it requires review when time advances and technology changes. That is what we start here today. We propose a modernized, enhanced A-CAM program. This means raising deployment obligations to 100 Megabits down and 20 Megabits up. It also means finding other ways to align our work with recent legislation like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. On that score, I want to thank Commissioner Starks and Commissioner Carr for their efforts to harmonize our proposal with the cyber standards in the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment Program as well as participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program.

This is not the only effort we're making to ensure that new broadband programs are working hand-in-glove with long-standing FCC efforts. Last year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and Department of Agriculture to memorialize how we plan to work together and share broadband data. And just one week ago, we signed an agreement to do the same with the Department of Treasury.

To reach everyone, everywhere it will take this kind of coordination. It will also take thoughtful effort to update our existing programs—as we do here with A-CAM.

Thank you to the staff who worked on this rulemaking, including Allison Baker, Ted Burmeister, Rebekah Douglas, Lynne Engledow, Jodie Griffin, Trent Harkrader, Jesse Jachman, Sue McNeil, Joe Sorresso, Hayley Steffen, Gil Strobel, Stephen Wang, and Suzanne Yelen from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Jim Eisner, Peter Gingeleskie, Michael Janson, and Craig Stroup from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Malena Barzilai, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel; and Matthew Duchesne and Barbara Esbin from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.