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For Immediate Release

SIMINGTON WELCOMES SPACEX APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 12, 2022— Today, Commissioner Nathan Simington at the Federal Communications Commission released the following statement about SpaceX’s Application for Review of the Wireline Competition Bureau’s decision denying its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund application:

“I welcome SpaceX’s appeal of the Wireline Competition Bureau’s decision to rescind the \$885 million in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) funding that was awarded to its Starlink service.

SpaceX won that award in a robust, competitive auction. Prior to the recent Wireline Competition Bureau decision, SpaceX appeared to me to be on track to deliver a novel high-speed, affordable service, not merely for the specific rural areas that it promised to serve as part of the RDOF program, but also for the rest of the country and potentially much of the world as well. While acknowledging the Bureau’s concerns about Starlink service achieving required benchmarks, I would point out that certain other RDOF bidders have yet to begin construction and are thus intrinsically farther behind.

I am concerned that a confluence of factors both within and without the FCC, including this decision, our lengthy review of SpaceX’s application to launch more satellites, and the NTIA’s decision to exclude satellite broadband providers from the \$42.5 billion BEAD program, will all combine to keep millions of rural Americans disconnected and excluded from our digital economy for years to come.

These actions will also risk giving Chinese satellite internet providers, who have the full support of their government, a competitive advantage in serving the rest of the world. This would be especially troubling because it might raise questions for low-earth orbit connectivity companies worldwide about the regulatory risks of choosing to domicile in the United States.

Further, I am troubled that the decision to rescind SpaceX’s RDOF award applied standards that were not in our RDOF rules, were never approved by the Commission, and in fact made their first appearance in this drastic action. I urge my fellow Commissioners to review SpaceX’s appeal and take prompt action to uphold our rules and make sure that millions of Americans in rural areas get connected as soon as possible.”

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).