

**REMARKS OF COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS
AT THE 2024 U.S. TECH FOR CLIMATE ACTION CONFERENCE
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
WASHINGTON, DC**

Thank you, Sasha, for the introduction. I was thrilled to speak at last year's inaugural conference, and I'm equally excited to help kickoff this year's discussion. Because in my mind, meeting the climate challenge is about a sustained effort and a sustained dialogue, both in and out of government, to reduce our emissions and secure opportunities in a clean energy economy.

Let me tell you how I'm thinking about climate action in my role as an FCC Commissioner. This year, the story has to begin with the Inflation Reduction Act. We just crossed the 18-month mark since its enactment, and we're already seeing impact. As of August 2023, the law had already spurred hundreds of new clean energy projects spread across 29 states accounting for [\\$278 billion in new investment](#). According to another estimate, the law was on pace to create [403,000 new jobs](#) as of the beginning of this year. Studies show that these gains are being shared widely, with many of them [flowing to rural communities](#) that are too often left behind by forces of change. Though it's still early, these results speak for themselves. We stand on the precipice of a tremendous—and broad-based—clean energy transformation. And while we should be proud of that impact, there is much more work left to be done.

My objective is to make sure connected technologies keep up with the transformation. They have to be a backer, not a bottleneck, because the potential here is significant.

With the right connected technologies, we can modernize our grid and upgrade its capabilities and resilience. A smarter grid can help us unlock two-way power transmission and more precision control, enhancing our ability to tap into new renewable energy sources and manage new devices like plug-in vehicles and electric heat pumps.

With the right connected technologies, we can also make our roads safer, more accessible, and more efficient. Intelligent infrastructure means less time spent in congestion. It means more time spent getting people and goods where they need to go.

With the right connected technologies, we can help our factories, farms, and heavy industries do more with less. The IoT revolution has made it easy to attach a sensor to just about every aspect of the production process. If you can gather and make sense of the data, then you can predict success and failure, and even better, you can optimize. That means more output from less raw material, with less downtime, less inventory, and less energy consumed. It means a lower carbon footprint, and a more competitive business to boot.

With the right connected technologies—on Earth and up in space—we can better understand how our climate is changing and track efforts to keep our emissions under control.

* * *

That's the opportunity. Now comes the work.

At the FCC, we're expanding America's fiber backbone—because in many ways, a connected building is a more efficient one. Last year, we authorized \$18.2 billion to bring high-speed fixed broadband to more than [700,000 unserved](#) rural locations, complementing deployment efforts under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and American Rescue Plan.

We're also supporting rural buildout through our \$9 billion 5G Fund, which seeks to bring fast 5G mobile networks to every community in the country. And let me tell you, the promise is about much more than gaming and Netflix. Next-generation wireless technologies have dramatically enhanced our ability to deliver fast, low-latency, and highly resilient mobile connectivity. Those requirements describe many of the pioneering climate-related applications that we've been discussing here today, from the grid to our roads to the production process.

We're also lowering entry barriers for wireless technology development through unlicensed, lightly licensed, and shared access spectrum models. These efforts could make it easier for companies to experiment with advanced manufacturing systems that depend on wireless connectivity.

And we're making it easier to launch—and connect to—satellite networks. By way of example, earlier this year, we licensed MethaneSAT, which just launched successfully a few weeks ago. The satellite can detect methane emissions with unprecedented precision, helping us problem-solve around a greenhouse gas with more than 28 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over a 20-year time horizon. Just last week, we created new rules to allow satellites to connect directly to cellular devices—whether that's the phone in your pocket or an off-the-shelf cellular modem. These “direct-to-device” systems can provide seamless coverage everywhere in the country, including on the farm and along our roadways. They could wind up emerging as a backbone of precision agriculture among other efficiency-focused rural applications.

* * *

Let me wrap up with two quick suggestions for the communications and technology industry.

First, as we focus on enabling others to reduce emissions, we should also find ways to reduce our carbon footprint ourselves. In 2019, I worked with a major telecom carrier on a first-of-its-kind commitment to make its 5G operations and related supply chain carbon neutral by 2025. We have to make sure that next-generation standards—6G and beyond—double-down on energy efficiency. I was pleased to see the White House forge a broad international consensus on this issue in its [Joint Statement Endorsing Principles for 6G](#). As work on 6G standards-setting continues, now is exactly the right time to throw your weight behind sustainability.

Second, see what you can do to make more of the future happen today. Ingenuity isn't just about doing something no one has thought of before. It's also about bringing capabilities we know are possible to market three, five, or seven years earlier than they would have been otherwise. That acceleration is critical because with climate, we're in a race against time. So invest, incubate, partner, and scale.

*

*

*

Thank you for your time. If you think of ways the FCC can be helpful to your role in climate action, please feel free to contact my office. We're here to listen, and to find new ways to help.