

**SEPARATE STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY**

Re: Section 257 Triennial Report to Congress; Identifying and Eliminating Market Entry Barriers for Entrepreneurs and Other Small Businesses (released Feb. 12, 2004)

In section 257 of the Communications Act, Congress recognized the vital role that entrepreneurs and other small businesses play in driving economic growth, job creation, and innovation throughout our economy. Congress's faith in innovation, investment, competition, and deregulation — as expressed in the 1996 Act — charted a course that creates opportunities in the communications industry for small businesses throughout the nation.

Over the last three years this Commission's policies and actions have advanced the interests of entrepreneurs and other small businesses across the communications industry as we have focused on achieving results, not rhetoric. In our quest to bring broadband Internet access to every corner of the United States, the Commission's broadband efforts, especially in the wireless space, have created literally thousands of new small businesses. Entrepreneurial WISPs are bringing broadband Internet access to Americans across the United States—from New York City to Ryan, Iowa. Countless other small businesses have emerged to provide equipment, network management solutions, security, and unlicensed wireless devices that make broadband Internet access a reality today for 50 million Americans.

Additionally, our efforts to spur broadband deployment have focused not only on infrastructure, but on empowering entrepreneurs to use our nation's broadband networks as platforms for innovation. The fruits of our labors are also producing results as small businesses and entrepreneurs are using broadband to break into the formerly monopolistic worlds of telephony, video distribution, and news production. Small companies like Vonage and 8x8 lead the Internet voice revolution. Video streaming advances have prompted a host of small businesses and entrepreneurs to enter a field formerly occupied only by big media. Our broadband Internet efforts have also empowered diverse media voices. From "blogs" to moveon.org, to Google's 4,500 diverse media sources from around the globe, we are swimming in an abundance and diversity of media that have never before been seen.

As the Commission continues to push competitive, affordable, and universal broadband Internet access to the masses resulting in the demolition of barriers to entry for small businesses and entrepreneurs in voice, video, data, and software and hardware development, we are also dramatically lowering barriers to entry for small businesses and entrepreneurs across our economy. Using the tools provided by the Internet, companies across the United States are able to enter into new product markets and sell their products and services to anyone in the world. Whether you are a small travel company, flower shop, clothing apparel store, farmer, educator, or health care provider there is a place for your innovations, entrepreneurial spirit and service to Americans in the 21st Century communications revolution.

The ability of small businesses to enter new or established markets does not, however, end with broadband Internet services. Small businesses and entrepreneurs are entering media markets at a pace never before seen — flooding the cable and satellite television network and program production ranks. Policies by Congress and this Commission have allowed for investments by the cable and satellite industries that have increased channel capacity — thereby creating new opportunities for small businesses. Furthermore, the Commission's efforts in digital television and digital radio, together with recent actions opening up the filing window for new and modified AM stations and upcoming actions in LPFM, are giving small businesses and entrepreneurs new opportunities in the broadcasting business.

In short, the Commission's promotion of competition, broadband deployment, and new media outlets has gone a long way toward fulfilling the goals set forth in the section 257 of the Act. While I am proud of our record, we must continue to search for new ways to break down barriers and create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and other small businesses.