

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Presubscribed Interexchange Carrier Charges (CC Docket No. 02-53)

The PIC-change charge grew out of the framework developed by the Commission to open the interstate telecommunications market to competition. This charge involves fees that can be passed on to consumers whenever they change long distance carriers. But the safe harbor the Commission established for permissible PIC-change charges is now two decades old. It was developed when interexchange carrier competition was new and local exchange competition was just a pipe dream. The telecommunications landscape has changed tremendously over the last twenty years, but the safe harbor has held steady at five dollars. There is ample evidence this amount is too high. It does not reflect the real cost of carrier changes and can act as a costly barrier to consumer choice.

I support today's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because the Commission needs to ensure its record reflects recent tariff filings. But I urge the Commission to move ahead and bring its PIC-change charge policies up to date as soon as possible. Consumers rightfully expect us to adjust our policies as markets change. In this case, we are long overdue for an update.