

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER KATHLEEN Q. ABERNATHY**

Re: Applications of Western Wireless Corporation and ALLTEL Corporation For Consent to Transfer Control of Licenses and Authorizations, WT Docket No. 05-50, Memorandum Opinion and Order.

I fully support today's decision to allow the creation of what I believe will be a stronger wireless competitor in rural areas – a company that will be uniquely situated to help speed the deployment of advanced wireless services to an increased number of consumers throughout America. Approval of this transaction, with the conditions we have imposed, is consistent with this Commission's commitment to rural America and to ensuring that consumers everywhere have access to advanced services.

While I appreciate the concerns raised with respect to the Applicants' ability to comply with the E911 deployment rules, I do not believe that such concerns are specific to this transaction. Making sure consumers have access to E911 services remains one of my – and the Commission's – top priorities. But any concerns regarding compliance with future deadlines are more appropriately addressed in the context of either specific requests for waiver or industry-wide requests for relief of our E911 rules.