

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

RE: Sunset of the Cellular Radiotelephone Service Analog Service Requirement and Related Matters, RM No. 11355

In our initial decision to sunset over time the cellular radiotelephone service analog requirement, I expressed concern about whether industry would be able to develop digital devices in sufficient time to enable digital service for individuals with hearing and speech disabilities (who, at that time, relied exclusively on analog devices). As it turned out, carriers, equipment manufacturers, members of the disability community and the FCC were able to work together to develop digital equipment solutions, even with some time to spare. Likewise, other affected groups, such as the telematics industry, went to great effort to prepare for the transition, and they now inform the Commission that they, too, are ready for the transition. A lot of good work has been done. I commend all the parties who came together to work on this.

We *are* transitioning to a new digital America. The changes and wonders it will usher in are mind-boggling. But getting there, and getting there together, takes some special commitment and some very hard work. In this instance, we can now work to move the ball forward. This action permits the wireless industry to redeploy spectrum from analog to digital use, much to the enhancement of carriers' ability to provide wireless broadband services. This change is of particular importance to rural carriers, for whom the analog requirement is disproportionately burdensome.

I do wish to comment briefly on the alarm industry's assertion that—despite more than five years warning—it now requires additional time to prepare for the transition. I am aware of the challenges this industry, like others, confronted. But I think it is neither equitable nor necessary to hold up the transition on this account. As today's item explains, some of this industry's own data indicates that there has been sufficient time to replace those alarms that rely on cellular analog service as a primary means of communication. It is an objective that can *still be accomplished on time* if the industry determines that its single-minded focus going forward should be on replacing radios rather than prolonging a search for regulatory relief.

My thanks to all who worked so hard, both in the affected industries and here at the Commission, to get this job done.