

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996

As a state official, I witnessed first-hand the incredible impact broadband networks and services have on real communities and families across Tennessee. From watching our state become the first to connect every school to the Internet, to celebrating the 10th anniversary of the E-rate program, I've seen how millions of children all across this country are benefiting in ways we never dreamed possible before. From Appalachia to Alaska, I have also seen the impact of broadband services to improve the quality and availability of health care services to more Americans, particularly those in the most rural and isolated communities. Pockets of incredible stories, uses, and innovative projects abound, but we need to do more in order to ensure that *all* Americans enjoy the benefits that broadband can bring.

While a state member of the Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services, I encouraged the Commission to do more, and am now pleased that we are doing just that. Congress charged us with regularly inquiring into the availability of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans and, through this proceeding, we are fulfilling our obligation. But, more importantly, we will be providing information to CEOs deciding where to locate a new business, to consumers seeking e-learning, and to healthcare providers sharing medical records to better coordinate patient care. I also hope this will enable us to showcase some of the most innovative and exciting public-private initiatives across the country and serve as a clearinghouse for local officials, businesses, providers, and consumers seeking to bring all the opportunities and promise that broadband provides to their communities.

Meeting the goal of providing broadband to this vast and geographically challenging country will not be easy. It cannot and should not be up to government alone. But with American ingenuity, corporate commitment, the promise of new jobs to economically depressed areas, and reduced healthcare costs, we all can be part of the solution. We must be in order to continue our role of global leadership and to ensure that we prepare, educate, and provide the tools necessary for tomorrow's innovators.