

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: Broadband Industry Practices, Notice of Inquiry, WC Docket No. 07-52

Today's item seeks input on how the broadband industry functions, including the relationships between broadband providers, content and application providers, and consumers. We also seek comment on how industry practices regarding the management of broadband data affect the deployment of broadband and innovation in the development of content, applications and network equipment that are all crucial to enhancing the value of broadband to consumers. It is essential that we, as the expert agency, carefully evaluate what is taking place in today's broadband marketplace to ensure that America remains a leader in an increasingly global economy. We must also employ our regulatory humility to recognize that imposing any new strictures on a blossoming industry could have significant and lasting stifling effects on the growth of broadband – and our overall economy.

The debate over broadband network practices has been percolating under several names in recent years – “net freedoms,” “connectivity principles,” “Internet policy,” and, of course, “net neutrality.” Whatever one chooses to call it, I prefer to try to view this issue from the perspective of consumers. The previous Commission did so in its Policy Statement and I hope it will continue to do so. While it remains important for us to understand the industry structure and the relationships between each of the different elements in the market, we must ensure that our policies promote, not deter, investment, innovation, and new entry in networks, products, and services that will help America remain competitive in the increasingly global economy.

As I have stated previously, I am skeptical of the present need to impose new rules, or even principles. In many ways, I think this issue has focused too much on the need to define a cure before there has been a disease, or even a high fever. That is why I am pleased that today's item signifies two important Commission ideals as we move further along into the broadband era: a willingness to engage with consumers and industry to discover exactly how the marketplace is functioning; and the humility to recognize the gravity of our actions. Accordingly, I support today's measured step of seeking more information about what is going on in the marketplace – what companies and consumers are experiencing, or not able to experience.