

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

*Re: Service Rules for the 698-746, 747-762 and 777-792 MHz Bands (WT Docket No. 06-150); Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems (CC Docket No. 94-102); Section 68.4(a) of the Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Telephones (WT Docket No. 01-309); Biennial Regulatory Review - Amendment of Parts 1, 22, 24, 27, and 90 to Streamline and Harmonize Various Rules Affecting Wireless Radio Services (WT Docket No. 03-264); Former Nextel Communications, Inc. Upper 700 MHz Guard Band Licenses and Revisions to Part 27 of the Commission's Rules (WT Docket No. 06-169); Implementing a Nationwide, Broadband, Interoperable Public Safety Network in the 700 MHz Band (PS Docket No. 06-229); Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010 (WT Docket No. 96-86).*

Broadband deployment is vital to our nation. The availability of ubiquitous, reliable, high-speed broadband access already is changing the way Americans work and live, but we must act to ensure that the unprecedented business, educational, and healthcare opportunities that broadband makes possible are available to all Americans, regardless of where they chose to live. I'm not alone in this opinion. Every member of this Commission has voiced the need for ubiquitous, affordable broadband, and Members of Congress have clearly indicated their belief that the FCC must do more to get broadband services deployed to all Americans.

The adoption of today's item is a critical step towards achieving this shared goal. The inherent propagation characteristics of the 700 MHz band could make it less expensive to construct new networks covering larger geographic areas, making it ideal for expanding the availability of broadband in rural areas. At the same time, the band potentially provides better in-building coverage than higher frequencies, which not only would facilitate the provision of advanced services in urban areas but also could help improve 911 access and location system performance. The rules we adopt today, along with the detailed questions set forth in the Further Notice, bring us one step closer to putting this critical spectrum into the hands of those who can best put it to work.

In conducting the upcoming 700 MHz auction, we must be particularly mindful of the following Congressional directives: (1) encouraging small businesses, rural telephone companies, and businesses owned by members of minority groups and women to participate in the auction; and (2) commencing the auction no later than January 28, 2008, with the proceeds of the auction to be deposited into the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Fund no later than June 30, 2008. These directives are not mutually exclusive.

In the highly successful AWS auction, the Commission increased the amount of spectrum licensed in smaller geographic areas – 20 megahertz to be exact – to afford greater opportunities for smaller, rural or regional providers to obtain access to that spectrum at auction. Forty eight rural telephone companies were winning bidders in the AWS auction – a clear indicator of success. I am very interested in hearing comments on how the proposed band plan would help to ensure a repeat of that success.

The sooner the auction begins, the closer we will be to reaping the benefits of services provided via this prime spectrum. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this forward expeditiously.