

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

In the Matter of High-Cost Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 05-337; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, CC Docket No. 96-45

Congress directed the Commission to institute the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service so that the Joint Board could recommend necessary changes to the Commission's regulations. As stewards of public funds, our obligation to preserve and advance universal service mandates that we recommend immediate changes to stem the explosive growth in high-cost universal service support disbursements. I am proud of the consensus achieved by this Joint Board in fulfillment of its duties.

This interim action is just that: interim. As the Recommended Decision and its companion Public Notice make clear, the Joint Board is committed to making further recommendations regarding comprehensive high-cost universal service reform within six months of this Recommended Decision. I am committed, as the federal Chair, to putting the Joint Board in a position to make those recommendations.

Every member of this Joint Board supports the principles of universal service: to promote the availability of quality services at just, reasonable, and affordable rates; to increase access to advanced telecommunications services throughout the Nation; and to advance the availability of such services to all consumers. Our recommendation today is a step towards more more fully implementing those principles. I look forward to working with my federal and state colleagues and with all stakeholders as we continue to make progress.