

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

Re: *Comprehensive Review of the Universal Service Fund Management, Administration and Oversight*, WC Docket No. 05-195

As Federal Chair of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, I am fully committed toward furthering the key goals of the program: promoting the availability of quality services at just, reasonable and affordable rates, increasing access to advanced telecommunications services, and advancing availability of these services to all Americans wherever they live.

As we consider the best policies to achieve these goals and move toward comprehensive reform, it is of utmost importance that we have a Universal Service Program that functions effectively through rigorous financial oversight in order to fulfill its mission. This Notice of Inquiry takes a productive step in that direction, again taking heed of Government Accounting Office recommendations regarding improvements to both the management and administration of the Universal Service Fund. The NOI builds on the Commission's efforts to bolster oversight of the USF and USAC, seeking comment on what additional safeguards we can implement to prevent waste, fraud and abuse as well as any additional measures that could be taken to reduce improper or under-payment. We also ask broadly what additional performance measures and management techniques the Commission could adopt to improve the administration, operations and overall efficiency of the USF.

As stewards of public funds, the Commission has an important role in insuring a Universal Service Fund that is efficiently and effectively managed in order to advance its goals for millions of consumers across this country. I would like to thank Chairman Kevin Martin for his leadership, and look forward to working with colleagues toward ensuring an accountable and sustainable USF.