

**CONCURRING STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MEREDITH A. BAKER**

Re: *High-Cost Universal Service Support*, WC Docket No. 05-337; *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45

I have long felt strongly that the Universal Service Fund is well overdue for a comprehensive overhaul, in light of significantly changed circumstances in the communications marketplace. For now, however, we must work within the fund that we have, and we must address a remand related to the existing non-rural high-cost universal service support mechanism. I support our efforts to release this Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in a timely manner to comply with the Commission's commitments in the course of the Tenth Circuit appeals.

I concur today, however, because I am concerned about whether the tentative conclusions in this item, if ultimately adopted, fully satisfy the concerns of the court. We have committed to address this remand by April 2010, and I expect that the non-rural high-cost mechanism will be considered as part of comprehensive reform as well. I hope a robust record will be developed, and I look forward to supporting an order in this proceeding that both resolves the court's concerns and makes sense in light of the National Broadband Plan.

I am encouraged that the item states our intent to move forward with comprehensive reform in the wake of the National Broadband Plan, and I look forward to working with my Commission colleagues to develop a thoughtful, practical, and pragmatic universal service program that is appropriately tailored for the future of communications.