

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MEREDITH ATTWELL BAKER**

Re: *Petition for Declaratory Ruling to Clarify Provisions of Section 332(c)(7)(B) to Ensure Timely Siting Review and to Preempt Under Section 253 State and Local Ordinances that Classify All Wireless Siting Proposals as Requiring a Variance*, WT Docket No. 08-165.

Wireless broadband is improving the quality of lives across the country. By 2020 it is expected that most people will access the Internet with a wireless device and that most broadband networks will contain wireline and wireless components. As we are learning every day, building the infrastructure necessary to support those networks, to bring the benefits of these networks to the people who need them, any place, any time is an enormous challenge.

Our action today addresses one important aspect of network infrastructure deployment—the time it can take to build out wireless infrastructure--and will help facilitate the process of building or upgrading the towers that are necessary to support our wireless broadband. However, it is only a first step. We will need to continue to look for ways to encourage and facilitate broadband deployments in ways that are consistent with the needs and interests of the communities where they are deployed.

The item before us carefully balances several concerns in accomplishing the Commission's goal. First, the item recognizes the rights and duties of local communities to review and approve applications for zoning approvals for wireless communications facilities. At the same time, the item also appreciates the need to provide greater timeliness and certainty to the men and women who build our mobile broadband infrastructure.

Several years ago, I was involved NTIA's comprehensive effort to lower barriers for broadband innovation, which included a process for streamlining and simplifying permitting on federal lands for rights-of-way, including tower siting. It was a useful undertaking that helped spur wireless deployments in previously unserved areas. I hope our action today will be equally successful.

In general, as we seek to promote and encourage our nation's broadband infrastructure, and particularly mobile broadband, we should always seek ways to streamline the deployment process while at the same time preserving the interests of local communities. I believe the item before us is a step in the right direction.

I am especially pleased that our item today recognizes the streamlined tower citing procedures that are already in place in a number of states across the country, and hope other states will follow their lead as well.

I thank the Chairman and the Bureau leadership for bringing this item before the Commission, and am pleased to join my colleagues in lending my support.