

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Fixed and Mobile Services in the Mobile Satellite Service Bands at 1525-1559 MHz and 1626.5-1660.5 MHz, 1610-1626.5 MHz and 2483.5-2500 MHz, and 2000-2020 MHz and 2180-2200 MHz, ET Docket No. 10-142.*

As we work to expand broadband opportunities for the American people, maximizing the public interest benefits of our finite spectrum resource presents us with a huge challenge. As demands for speed and mobility increase, so does the demand for spectrum upon which mobile wireless broadband rides. Unfortunately, we can't make any more spectrum, so we *need* to find ways to optimize our supply by expanding flexibility of use for licensees and improving efficiency through new and innovative technologies. To that end, I have long supported efforts—as exemplified by FCC's creation of the Spectrum Dashboard—to examine what spectrum is being used, how it is being used, and whether it can be put to better use to serve the public interest. Similarly, I support examinations, like the one we launch today, that explore ways to maximize the use of the spectrum resource—in this case, several mobile satellite service bands.

This proceeding does more than emphasize the need to intensify the use of spectrum to provide wireless broadband opportunities; it also serves as a reminder of the critical role that the mobile satellite industry plays in our nation's communications infrastructure. I am a true believer in the importance of satellites—a sentiment that I have carried with me since before I came to the Commission. In fact, I can recall very vividly the shock waves that went through the nation in 1957 when the then-Soviet Union launched Sputnik. And, I remember feeling at least a little bit better the following year, standing on the roof-top of a hotel in Florida, watching the launch from Cape Canaveral of one of our first U.S. satellites.

Perhaps the excitement of those early days of satellites won't ever be recaptured, but the sustainability and redundancy that satellites provide to U.S. national security and public safety cannot be underestimated. I have seen it first-hand. When I traveled to the Gulf Coast in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it was MSS terminals that were the first up-and-running, providing essential connectivity. And earlier this year, we saw the same unparalleled responsiveness and reliability when the FCC deployed a team to Haiti in the wake of the tragic earthquake. These two recent events serve as powerful illustrations of the need to preserve satellite capability—especially in those bands where systems are operating on a globally or regionally harmonized basis. Once the benefits of harmonization are lost, they are probably lost forever.

Luckily, our hard-working FCC staff is also mindful of these important considerations, and I am confident that what we are discussing in today's proceeding will result in a healthy and productive dialogue. And we must remember that we are not looking at an either/or proposition. Instead, I believe that—while we consider all options—we should focus on the interplay between the mobile satellite service and terrestrial wireless broadband. The potential for rural America, and for public safety, remains enormous. Within the past year, we have seen—for one of the bands highlighted in today's item—an announcement from TerreStar, a 2 GHz licensee, and AT&T about a plan to offer an integrated smartphone providing wireless connectivity with back-up satellite coverage. We can only guess where technology can take us through synergizing the different, yet complimentary, strengths of mobile satellite and wireless broadband.

Lastly, I appreciate the willingness of my colleagues to raise questions regarding the need for any mechanisms—such as spectrum fees—to compensate the American people for the terrestrial use of the public spectrum resource. For international policy reasons, as well as the current U.S. legal framework, a satellite licensee does not bid for its spectrum license through an auction. However, charging fees for the ancillary terrestrial use in the MSS bands could provide incentives to ensure that the spectrum resource is used more efficiently and intensively.

I would like to thank the staff in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, the Office of Engineering and Technology and the International Bureau for their hard work on today's Notices of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry. I look forward to working with the Chairman and my colleagues as we continue to work to maximize the public interest benefits of the spectrum resource.