

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Establishment of the Office of Native Affairs and Policy in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Order*

This is a day I have long hoped and worked for. The opening of an Office of Native Affairs and Policy to serve Federally-recognized Tribes and other Native organizations is one of the central objectives announced in the National Broadband Plan. The hard work—and I mean *really* hard work—is still ahead of us. I have seen first-hand the unacceptable state of communications throughout much of Indian Country. In so many places where Native Americans live, poverty endures, unemployment is at levels no society should tolerate, education languishes, and basic public safety falls far short of what people have a right to expect. Too many promises have gone unfulfilled, too many grand pronouncements have fallen by the wayside, over generations of our history. Now is the time to redeem those promises, building a trust relationship and using the revolutionary state-of-the-art technologies available to us to make all Americans the beneficiaries of Twenty-first century opportunity and a more fully-shared democracy. I believe we can make it happen.