

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Empowering Consumers to Avoid Bill Shock; Consumer Information and Disclosure*, CG Docket No. 10-207, CG Docket No. 09-158.

It's always great to start an agenda meeting with a consumer item, because these items reflect our fundamental mission—that is to protect consumers. This item makes clear the present Commission's appreciation of its role as a consumer protection agency. There have been too many years in our past, and I don't say this in a partisan way, when this agency has spent more time listening and responding to the interests of big business than to consumers—and consumers were left *literally* paying the bill for that—and it's been an enormous bill. So I thank the Chairman for putting this front-and-center, and I look forward to beginning many more agenda meetings with similarly consumer-friendly items. My thanks also to Joel Gurin and his committed and stellar team in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. It's a pleasure working with them.

Who among us has not been shocked with one charge or another that we've received on a bill from a service provider? Just last night, my daughter Claire shared with me a CNN.com story about an American in Haiti who was down there to help the earthquake-ravaged people of that island recover from their awful disaster. Her \$35,000 bill for texting came as a total surprise, apparently because of lack of adequate information outreach by her service provider.

In November of last year, the Government Accountability Office released a report that found more than one-third of all Americans had received unexpected charges on their wireless phone bills during the previous year. It goes without saying that, in these economic times when the next mail delivery might bring a foreclosure notice, consumers need predictability in their bills more than ever. With today's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, we lay the groundwork to require wireless phone companies to alert customers as they approach their limits on voice, text and data usage. We also examine how to expand the tools available to consumers to monitor and cap their usage.

Today's action is long overdue. Customers throughout the European Union already enjoy protections against bill shock. I am a firm believer in learning—and building upon—the success of international counterparts. To that end, I appreciate the willingness of the Bureau to expand the Notice's discussion of these already-implemented regulations and to seek comment on the lessons of the European experience. When it comes to consumer protection, all nations can learn together—although I would like to see ours first in the ranks of consumer protection.