

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Universal Service Reform: Mobility Fund, WT Docket No. 10-208*

Here we have yet another step toward achieving a key goal of the National Broadband Plan: connecting America to advanced mobile services. Getting this Mobility Fund up and running is an important step as we work simultaneously to reform the Universal Service Fund. While it's not going to get everyone and every place into advanced wireless service, it is going to help, it is important, and it's something we can and should do on an aggressive timeline to realize needed and timely investment in unserved and underserved America.

The new Mobility Fund will provide a much-needed down payment on closing America's digital divide. We've got a ways to go. That was brought home to me over the past couple of weeks as my wife and I vacationed in China. Even as we toured the treasures of Chinese antiquity, like the Great Wall, the Terra Cotta warriors and the Forbidden City, we also were able to take advantage of some pretty impressive telecommunications technology. We sailed down the Yangtze River, surrounded on both sides by mountains, and as we floated down those long and beautiful river valleys, I was almost never without 3G service. The sight of that 3G signal along the top of my Blackberry screen almost everywhere we went on our trip made quite an impression on me. I dare say there are many places in the United States—and they're not just river valleys, either—where I wouldn't find that kind of service. That's one example of why moving ahead with a Mobility Fund and comprehensive USF reform is so important.

I want to commend the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Wireline Competition Bureau for their hard work in bringing this item to us. In it, we rightly consider how to get the most bang-for-the-buck from Mobility Fund support, how to ensure that smaller carriers can compete in the bidding, and how to protect consumers and ratepayer dollars once investment is made. I am particularly grateful to the staff for ensuring that today's Notice asks questions not only about expanding coverage for those Americans in areas that are underserved by 3G and 4G service, but also that it examines how we might prioritize support to those areas that are truly unserved.

I look forward to working with the Chairman and my colleagues to move this proceeding to completion quickly. And, I will continue to work with our Office of Native Affairs as we consult government-to-government to examine options for Mobility Fund and other USF support to expand coverage on tribal lands. Thanks to everyone who had a hand in this.