

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Amendment of Part 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Use of Microwave for Wireless Backhaul and Other Uses and to Provide Additional Flexibility to Broadcast Auxiliary Service and Operational Fixed Microwave Licensees; Petition for Rulemaking filed by Fixed Wireless Communications Coalition to Amend Part 101 of the Commission's Rules to Authorize 60 and 80 MHz Channels in Certain Bands for Broadband Communications; WT Docket No. 10-153; RM-11602*

This is a fine day for rural wireless consumers. We make good on the National Broadband Plan's recommendation for more availability of microwave in rural America, and we set the stage for more action to decrease deployment costs of this technology—something that is becoming increasingly important as we move toward a 4G world. The current spectrum crunch is also a backhaul crunch, and microwave is often the answer in rural areas where it may not be economical to run fiber. The benefits of mobile broadband are at this point obvious; what's equally obvious is that no one should be left behind because of where they happen to live.

This order clears the regulatory way to making greater use of 650 MHz spectrum for microwave, and this will benefit those in approximately half of America's land mass, or 10 percent of our population. At the same time, the item rightfully acknowledges the interests of microwave's spectrum neighbors in the bands - Broadcast Auxiliary Service and Cable TV Relay Service. Today we take appropriate and reasonable steps to make sure these services co-exist. For example, we reserve two nationwide channels for BAS and CARS to accommodate TV pickup stations covering events that occur outside their license areas.

Still, there is more we can do. Today's further notice asks questions about additional steps we can take to encourage greater use of microwave backhaul. To be sure, we must be alert to guard against interference and to promote spectrum efficiency. But examining our current technical standards for antennas, efficiency, and channel size presents additional opportunities to increase the presence of, and competition in, microwave backhaul. As an example, tower siting costs and a lack of desirable antenna positions drive up provider costs; exploring our antenna standards may bring relief. I look forward to hearing from all interested parties on points such as these.

I want to thank the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Chairman for moving us forward on the increasingly important matter of backhaul for rural consumers.