STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS

Re: *Review Of Wireline Competition Bureau Data Practices*, WC Docket No. 10-132; *Computer III Further Remand Proceedings: Bell Operating Company Provision of Enhanced Services; 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review – Review of Computer III and ONA Safeguards and Requirements*, CC Docket Nos. 95-20, 98-10.

Gathering good data—an issue near and dear to this Commissioner's heart, as I know it is to the Chairman's—is critical to the FCC's ability to do its job. For far too many years, we moved away from this responsibility, relying less on our own analysis and substituting limited commercial data for our own. Certainly we should be smart, sparing and efficient about the information we collect to avoid undue burdens. But the public interest must always be our lodestar in these considerations. Consumers are certainly my first and foremost concern, but markets, too, rely on credible and reliable government data. How can a country dig its way out of a recession without solid economic indicators like unemployment numbers and GDP? As I've said before, if federal and state governments decided tomorrow to stop gathering data and regulating how it is reported, the U.S. economy would screech to a halt.

If we want the Internet economy to continue to drive growth and opportunity in this country, we must have regular, systematic reporting of high-quality broadband data. How will we know where to invest scarce public resources if we don't know with any meaningful specificity where broadband is deployed? How can innovators and investors make informed decisions with regard to new technologies and applications if we don't know the broadband speed that American consumers are actually getting? Without understanding the value proposition broadband offers—that is, the price per bit—how can we promote its adoption and ensure that no American is on the wrong side of the digital divide?

These are not new questions before the Commission. We have asked many of them twice before. In 2008, I concurred with the Commission's further notice on many of these questions because I believed it was time then for a final Order detailing the kinds and amounts of data the Commission needs to protect American consumers. While I am more optimistic now that we will get action soon, consistency compels me to concur this time, too, on the first Notice before us today, the *Form 477 NPRM*. I look forward to the third time being the charm with a final Order in the very near term.

I vote to approve the second Notice, an NPRM proposing the elimination of legacy reporting obligations stemming from the *Computer Inquiries*. The Commission has already relieved carriers of the underlying obligations, partly through a controversial and altogether untidy "deemed granted" forbearance process. The original idea had been acquiring data to maintain competition. The forbearance process under two previous Commissions was tragically aimed at getting rid of both.

The history behind this item, though, begs a different question—not whether we are collecting data irrelevant to the Commission, but whether we have all the new data the Commission needs to understand what is going on in the world of business, technology and consumer information. I freely admit that the particular information here may be a vestige of a bygone era, but I only want to emphasize that ridding ourselves of unneeded data requirements is actually less important than guaranteeing we have the data we need.