

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

- Re: *Implementation of Section 224 of the Act, WC Docket No. 07-245, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket No. 09-51*
- Re: *Acceleration of Broadband Deployment: Expanding the Reach and Reducing the Cost of Broadband Deployment by Improving the Policies Regarding Public Rights of Way and Wireless Facilities Siting, WC Docket No. 11- 59*

The National Broadband Plan clearly and rightly identified pole attachment policy as a key part of ensuring that all Americans have access to robust and affordable broadband service. It's not sexy or very exciting and you can quickly get lost in the weeds, but clarifying the rules surrounding rates and access to poles has been on the Commission's to-do list for longer than I've been here—and that's a long time. Pole attachments are without a doubt one of the critical inputs when communications providers assess the economics of deploying advanced telecommunications networks. Now, finally, and thanks to the leadership of the Chairman and the hard work of the staff, we can check it off the list. Today's action should do a lot to promote our ambitious broadband deployment goals. And, by the way, accelerating the roll out of advanced telecommunications services *is* exciting.

Our experience over the past fifteen years has demonstrated a need for a more detailed framework to govern pole attachments. I believe these revisions of the pole attachment rules will promote a more competitive broadband market and spur broadband's availability throughout the country. To that end, we establish a more balanced process to ensure timely and non-discriminatory access to poles for both wireline and wireless attachers, which will go a long way toward removing uncertainty and minimizing delays that have frustrated deployment. The disparities in pole attachment rates for different providers have also been a source of confusion and litigation, and hopefully the clarity we add today will discourage such outcomes. The provision in this item of a mechanism to ensure that incumbent local exchange carriers will have a forum to seek Commission remedies for rates that they believe to be unjust and unreasonable is a good step in the right direction.

We should always be mindful of, and build upon, the successful experiences at local and state levels. This much we know: in order to spread the wonders of broadband to every corner of this country we are going to need a set of best practices in place that will both expand the reach and reduce the costs of deployment. While we spirit ahead to make broadband a reality, we need to be cognizant of the authority that local, state and Tribal entities have over rights-of-way and the siting of wireless facilities. In beginning this conversation today with the Notice of Inquiry just presented by the Bureau, we need to be mindful of not impinging on local rights as we keep our important broadband objectives front-and-center. We need the right questions asked, the right data gathered and the input from all the relevant stakeholders. Getting high-speed, value-laden broadband out to every citizen in the land is, if it is to become reality, a partnership exercise—just as all the major infrastructure build-outs in this country have been, going back to the very beginning. That means the private sector and the public sector—the public sector including the federal, state and local levels. Working together, we can get this job done and keep the United States a world leader in technology, innovation and consumer opportunity.

My thanks to the Bureau for its hard work here and to the Chairman for bringing us another critical component of the National Broadband Plan.