

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Reexamination of Roaming Obligations of Commercial Mobile Radio Service Providers and Other Providers of Mobile Data Services, WT Docket No. 05-265*

Today's action on data roaming advances two key goals of mine and of the Commission's—protecting wireless consumers and promoting sorely-needed competition in the wireless market. Consumer demand for mobile connectivity grows stronger by the day. That demand is not limited to voice service, and neither should be the requirement to offer roaming on reasonable terms. These safeguards ensure that small regional carriers can hope to compete in the wireless market-place while investing in their own build-out of facilities. It means that their subscribers can have comparable flexibility to move about the country as customers of the wireless behemoths.

Our regulations must always try to keep pace with the changing technology and market environments. In our new digital world, few consumers buy a mobile handset exclusively for voice telephony services. Americans in every corner of the land rely on their smartphones to stay connected through e-mail, social media and other applications—whether for business reasons or for communicating with family and friends. What good is that smartphone if it can't be used when a subscriber is roaming across the county or across the country? Our regulations must reflect today's reality and not make artificial distinctions between voice and data telecommunications.

I commend the Chairman for bringing this proceeding to resolution. And of course, I thank the staff of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for their tireless work on the item. I would have supported an item that gave carriers the right to negotiate roaming arrangements at “just and reasonable” rates as opposed to the “commercially reasonable” standard we adopt here. I am confident, however, that vigorous application of today's Order can and should lead to much the same result—ensuring that consumers, no matter where they live or what carrier they choose, can use mobile technology to the fullest extent possible.