

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband Data Improvement Act*, GN Docket No. 11-121

Today's report shows real progress in the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans. It reveals that for some, broadband services are faster and more robust than ever. Consider, for instance, that more than 80 percent of households now have access to broadband at speeds as high as 100 Mbps.

But at the same time, this report demonstrates that broadband remains out of reach for 19 million Americans. The bulk of these Americans—14.5 million—live in rural areas that lack basic infrastructure for fixed broadband service. Furthermore, nearly one in three Americans do not subscribe to broadband, citing lack of relevance, lack of affordability, and lack of digital literacy.

These numbers are even more troubling when the United States is compared with the rest of the world. Today, this report cites data that show that the United States is ranked fifteenth in the world for fixed broadband penetration. We are ranked seventh in the world for mobile broadband penetration.

The United States should lead the world in broadband. Until the data unequivocally demonstrate that we do, how can the answer to our Section 706 inquiry—whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion—be anything but no? We know that in the 21st century access to broadband means access to opportunity. It means access to jobs, access to education, and access to healthcare. This is the platform that will drive innovation, boost productivity, and enhance our ability to compete with other nations. So we must make our markets the most attractive worldwide for investment in all aspects of the digital economy.

To do so, the Commission is already taking action to advance broadband deployment and adoption for the millions of Americans without access today. We are moving forward with comprehensive universal service reform, implementing the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, and developing public and private partnerships to promote broadband adoption and digital literacy. We are also poised to carry out the world's first incentive auction to free up additional spectrum for mobile broadband services. These are exciting developments, though today's report is a thoughtful reminder that we still have work to do before every American has access and we unequivocally lead the world's broadband ranks.

Though there are challenges ahead, I believe that we are up for the task. The Notice of Inquiry we release today is a small step towards figuring out how to address these challenges, including a fresh perspective on the consumer experience. In particular, our inquiry includes factors beyond speed, like latency and capacity, that impact how consumers use their broadband connections. So I look forward to tackling these issues with my colleagues and thank Commission staff for their hard work on this report.