

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

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. 12-228

I wish to commend the Staff on today's release of the *Eighth Broadband Progress Report* and *Notice of Inquiry for the Ninth Broadband Progress Report*. This year's Report is more detailed than ever before, and it closely reviews the actions taken by both the private and public sectors to advance the availability of broadband to all Americans.

In addition to the significant investments made by industry by way of deployment to date, the FCC has achieved many of the goals we set forth to make broadband available to those who do not currently have it. Since last year's *Report*, we have reformed the Universal Service Fund's high-cost program so that it directly supports the deployment of broadband-enabled networks in rural areas. We have taken important steps to address the availability of broadband for low-income consumers through the Lifeline program, including providing the flexibility for consumers to use their subsidy to purchase bundled voice and broadband services. We also have implemented a pilot project that will offer broadband service to low-income consumers. Moreover, the public-private initiative Connect-to-Compete was launched, and similar industry-led programs are entering their second year—all of which are providing low-cost service, equipment, and training to consumers who otherwise could not afford broadband.

As we continue to implement our reforms and further address the barriers to deployment and broadband adoption, I expect that the statistics presented in our annual assessment will continue to improve. But it is clear from today's *Report* that we are not ready to declare victory just yet, as approximately 19 million Americans still lack access to terrestrial fixed broadband services that meet our broadband definition, and the adoption gap still shows that about 1/3 of Americans do not subscribe to broadband. Broadband service has not been made available to *all* Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion. Moreover, for low-income consumers and residents of rural areas, Tribal Lands, and the Territories, this finding is even more acute. It is necessary, therefore, that we continue to promote reforms and policies that will ensure broadband availability to *all Americans* no matter where they live, work, or travel in this great nation.

While I am pleased that we have included a discussion specific to the Territories in this year's *Report* and request comment in the *NOI* on the broadband challenges in the Territories, it is clear that we must continue to pay particular attention to the specific needs of remote and insulated areas. The same holds true for Tribal Lands. We should continue to evaluate the impact of our reforms and policies in these areas and be open to further refining them. In doing so, it is my hope that we can make more progress in addressing the broadband needs in those areas.

I also believe that the *NOI's* review of the broadband definition, including whether we should modify our findings to include mobile service, are important discussions that I encourage interested parties to engage with us on. As noted in the *Report and NOI*, the marketplace is rapidly evolving. More consumers are relying upon their mobile devices to access broadband than ever before. We included in our *USF Transformation Order* the goal that consumers have access to mobile broadband and voice service, by allocating \$300 million in Mobility Fund Phase I and \$500 million annually in Phase II. Moreover, our inquiry includes questions about the speeds offered and consumed for fixed service, as well as the capacity of networks, including latency and data capacity. I am particularly interested in the data the Commission would rely upon should we modify our *Ninth Broadband Progress Report*. In particular, the Commission has yet to complete its proceeding to update the Form 477 wherein we collect broadband subscriber information. Taking the necessary steps to ensure that the Commission has the

relevant data to assess such additional broadband criteria will be crucial if we determine to include such data in the *Ninth Broadband Progress Report*.