

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL**

Re: *Amendment of Parts 1, 2, 22, 24, 27, 90 and 95 of the Commission's Rules to Improve Wireless Coverage Through the Use of Signal Boosters, WT Docket No. 10-4*

The consumer benefits of signal boosters are unquestioned. They are important components in the comprehensive private sector effort to maximize spectral efficiency. Boosters allow Americans in rural areas and those that live on the fringe of a provider's service area to receive stronger signal strength and improved wireless broadband coverage. They are also used to improve public safety communications and wireless services in buildings, tunnels and other areas where service can be unreliable. These benefits and improvements can be accomplished rapidly and affordably without commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) providers building additional infrastructure.

Although it is estimated that over two million consumer signal boosters are currently deployed, there were no rules regarding their operation until today. While the majority of boosters have been improving the consumer experience without incident, wireless service providers have experienced some instances of harmful interference from boosters interacting with their networks. And, as we all know, the primary objective of the FCC's wireless policy is to prevent harmful interference to spectrum licensees. For these reasons, I vote in support of this order which, among other things, sets forth rules for the authorized operation of consumer signal boosters and requires that consumer and industrial boosters are clearly labeled. Today's action should help American consumers benefit from boosters, while ensuring that their neighbors continue to enjoy reliable service and that wireless service providers do not experience degradation to their networks.

This proceeding has been far from simple or easy. Since 2007, when CTIA filed a petition for declaratory ruling regarding the use of boosters in the CMRS bands, the Commission has analyzed the sharp debate regarding the operation of consumer signal boosters. I would like to acknowledge and thank the wireless industry and signal booster manufacturers for coming together with a joint proposal for technical standards that will result in affordable and reliable consumer signal boosters that are unlikely to cause interference. Private sector solutions are always preferable over government mandates, which is the key reason why I am supporting today's action.

Although the parties were able to reach consensus over technical standards, the Commission was left to resolve some remaining issues. A debate has ensued regarding carrier consent to signal boosters, registration and enforcement mechanisms, and the timeframe for implementing the new standards. In creating a framework for authorized consumer signal booster use, this order tries to weigh the costs and benefits to the wireless industry, signal booster manufacturers, and consumers. For instance, in adopting a similar licensing model to consumer handsets that operate on wireless networks, signal booster authorization will require provider consent and consumer device registration. Such requirements may be considered to be burdens by some. The largest wireless providers, however, have indicated that they will consent to the use of FCC-certified signal boosters meeting the new technical standard on their networks. Not only will such consent and registration requirements assist providers in preventing harmful interference, but they also ensure that wireless providers remain in control of their networks as required by the Communications Act.¹ I hope that we achieved the correct balance. The Commission, however, has committed to review the technical standard, registration and enforcement rules after two years to see if they should be modified or if there is room for improvement.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 310(d).

Finally, I thank the Chairman for incorporating edits, my fellow Commissioners for engaging collegially on this matter, and the Commission staff from multiple Bureaus and Offices who worked on the order. I also would like to recognize the Mobility Division for all of your efforts in facilitating the industry consensus on technical rules and getting the proceeding to the point where we will be implementing rules, which a few years ago seemed to be unlikely. Thank you.