

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER**

Re: *Amendment of Section 73.1216 of the Commission's Rules Related to Broadcast Licensee-Conducted Contests*, MB Docket No. 14-226

Today, we are taking an important step to modernize the way Americans receive and understand information—specifically contest rules—in the digital age.

Almost forty years ago, the Commission adopted the Contest Rule to ensure that television and radio broadcasters would conduct contests fairly and substantially as represented to the public. At that time, the Commission adopted the rule out of concern about the ways in which broadcasters were conducting contests over the air.

Since then, we are now living in what I like to call the fourth great network revolution—the marriage of computing and connectivity. Americans obtain information today in ways that are vastly different from when the Contest Rule was adopted. Recent information reveals that Americans spend more time using their mobile devices than they do watching television. Access to the Internet is more ubiquitous than access to television—so we should reflect that in our rules.

While requiring broadcasters to comply with their obligation to disclose important contest information through on-air announcements made sense when the radio and television were dominant methods of accessing information, such a requirement is less useful today. Revising the Contest Rule in a way that reflects how the public accesses and consumes information in the 21st Century only makes sense.

To that end, we are proposing to update the Contest Rule by allowing broadcasters to meet their obligation to disclose important contest information either through broadcast announcements or by making such information available on the Internet. In addition, we are proposing rule changes that would define the disclosure obligation in cases where a broadcaster has chosen to meet that obligation easily through an Internet website.

Updating the Contest Rule as proposed gives consumers the option to make informed decisions by accessing contest information “on demand” and allowing them to review it at their convenience. Allowing stations to disclose contest information on the Internet would also meet consumer expectations about how and where to obtain this kind of information.

The proposed rule changes would also give broadcasters more flexibility in the methods by which to meet their obligation to disclose important contest information, without relaxing their duty to conduct contests with due regard for the public interest. It's important to note that we are giving broadcasters a new option, but they can meet their obligation using today's current requirements.

I applaud the leadership of my colleagues up here with me today, especially that of Commissioner O'Rielly. I would also like to thank the Media Bureau staff for their hard work, with a special call out to Raelynn Remy and Mary Beth Murphy in the Policy Division and Media Bureau Chief Bill Lake. Thanks to you all—both in this room and out of it—we have advanced the ball in a significant way.

By launching this rulemaking, the Commission is taking another step to modernize its rules in a way that capitalizes on the Internet's ubiquity and efficiency to meet the needs and expectations of consumers. The Commission recognizes that the Internet is an effective tool for distributing information to consumers, and today's action is consistent with that value.