

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *City of Wilson, North Carolina Petition for Preemption of North Carolina General Statute Sections 160A-340 et seq., WC Docket No. 14-115, The Electric Power Board of Chattanooga, Tennessee Petition for Preemption of a Portion of Tennessee Code Annotated Section 7-52-601, WC Docket No 14-116.*

American enterprise and self-sufficiency are the stuff of legend. But when we really thrive is when we find common cause and come together to get things done.

For our forebears, this meant everything from holding barn raisings to building bridges to setting up cooperatives to bring electricity to our nation's farms. But infrastructure challenges like these are not limited to the past. We have communities that face them today—with broadband.

Broadband, after all, is more than a technology—it's a platform for opportunity. In urban areas, rural areas, and everything in between, high-speed service is now necessary to attract and sustain businesses, expand civic services, and secure a viable future. Without it, no community has a fair shot in the digital age.

I learned this first hand last year when I visited Lafayette, Louisiana. Deep in the heart of Acadiana where Zydeco was born, I got the chance to sit down—over some awfully good gumbo—with Lafayette City-Parish President Joey Durel and learn about the struggle to bring high-speed service to his community. It took time and tenacity; this was not an effort for the faint of heart. But eventually Lafayette did it—and brought lightning-fast broadband service to town through its municipal utility.

The story in Lafayette is similar to the one in Chattanooga, Tennessee and Wilson, North Carolina. They did something that was fundamentally American. When existing providers failed to meet their needs, they came together as a community and built it themselves. As a result, the Electric Power Board of the City of Chattanooga now offers Gigabit service to all of its customers and the residents of Wilson County have access to a municipal network that also supports Gigabit speed. Now both municipal providers want to extend their broadband offerings to other consumers nearby, in communities where the speeds are slower and the competitive choice more limited. So today we tear down barriers that prevent them from expanding their broadband service and offering more consumers more competitive choice. I am pleased to offer my support.