

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Amendment of the Commission's Rule with Regard to Commercial Operations in the 3550-3650 MHz Band, Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, GN Docket No. 12-354.

Today, we make history. We chart a new course for spectrum policy. That's because in the 3.5 GHz band we adopt a creative three-tiered model for spectrum sharing and management. This is a paradigm shift that paves the way for new services, new technologies, and more mobile broadband.

To be sure, our decision is chock-full of the small, complex technical details that only a spectrum geek could love. But this is big. With our work in the 3.5 GHz band, we leave behind the tired notion that we face a choice between licensed and unlicensed airwaves. That's because we create new spectrum licenses custom-built for small cell deployments and at the same time open up more spectrum for unlicensed services—the jet-fuel of wireless innovation. Even better, we do all of this while protecting those already in the band, including military applications that help keep us safe.

But today's success was not preordained. After all, when the National Telecommunications and Information Administration first identified the 3.5 GHz band as underused and suitable for sharing, the response was a collective shrug. Interest was not high because there were challenges presented by government users already in the band. To put it even more bluntly, when it came to making commercial use of 3.5 GHz, the consensus was this was a junk band. But instead of discarding this band as junk, we got creative and a result this spectrum is now fertile ground for innovative wireless uses.

If this story sounds familiar, that's because it is. Thirty years ago, we also had underused frequencies—at the time, they were in the 900 MHz, 2.4 GHz, and 5.8 GHz bands. These were airwaves that had been designated for industrial, scientific, and medical uses. But so little was happening in these airwaves, they were known in Washington as garbage bands. They were scraps of spectrum where a lot of experts concluded that the demand for wireless services would just be limited.

But the Commission refused to dismiss these bands as junk. Instead, it got creative. Rather than following the traditional route of providing licenses to allow single operators to control in these bands for specific purposes—it made them available to the public. As a result, three decades ago the first significant swaths of unlicensed spectrum were made available in these so-called garbage bands. Now a lot happened in the interim, including the development of a standard—802.11. But fast forward and you can see how this is the spectrum where Wi-Fi was born. Since then, Wi-Fi has become our on-ramp to the Internet. It has become a platform for wireless innovation. And unlicensed spectrum is now responsible for billions of dollars of economic activity every year.

They say history repeats itself. If that happens here, it would be a good thing. That's because in the 3.5 GHz band we are building on the success of past unlicensed spectrum policy and pushing it into the future. This is exciting. But of course, it is not without its challenges. We will need to closely monitor the development of new unlicensed air interfaces. To this end, I appreciate that the Chairman has committed to discussing these issues in an upcoming Public Notice. I support this approach—and hope that as we move forward we can be guided by three simple principles.

First, let's recognize that unlicensed spectrum and Wi-Fi is one of the great wireless success stories of the last thirty years. It's a story we want to continue.

Second, unlicensed spectrum should be open to anyone who plays by the rules. This was the principle that informed our earliest thinking about unlicensed spectrum—and it should continue to inform us today.

Third, existing users of unlicensed spectrum should be open to new innovation and at the same time, new entrants should respect existing users.

But back to the here and now. Thank you to the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Office of Engineering and Technology for your creative work in the 3.5 GHz band. If the future of unlicensed spectrum in this band is anything like the past—we can all look forward to new services, new technologies, and more mobile broadband.