

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, *ETC Annual Reports and Certifications*, WC Docket No. 14-58, *Rural Broadband Experiments*, WC Docket No. 14-259.

In case you haven't noticed, over the last few years the Commission's universal service policies have been the subject of a few changes. In fact, they've undergone an overhaul. Our programs have been more than just re-touched, they've been re-engineered and re-built, because we are no longer just taking a spin on the information superhighway. Today, high-speed communications services are indispensable infrastructure for civic and commercial life.

For our high-cost universal service program, this has meant a new name—the Connect America Fund—and a new focus on bringing broadband to rural communities.

Today, we advance this cause by putting in place a structure for the upcoming Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Between the Order and Rulemaking there are a lot of details here, so let me focus on what I think are the most important elements of the auction framework we put in place today.

First, our framework ensures that the auction will be open. We need broad participation because there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to getting service in rural communities. So we are open to any provider and technology that meets essential broadband performance and financial criteria.

Second, our framework recognizes that the auction must be fair. It will reward those whose proposals are economically efficient and also advance the statutory goals of universal service, including comparable services at comparable rates.

Third, our framework delivers on the need for accountability. The Order puts in place oversight mechanisms to make sure that the broadband improvements that result from this auction are both real and measurable.

From here, of course, we still have work to do. In particular, we cannot lose sight of our duty to preserve and advance universal service, especially in those states that are the centerpiece of the auction—the states where the price cap carrier turned down its initial offer of support. It would be unacceptable for the residents in these states to lose out again if this auction does not deliver the broadband and funding that they expect and deserve.

Finally, as today's Order recognizes, once this auction is in the books, we will need to move quickly to establish the Remote Areas Fund and continue our work to make sure our universal service policies do not leave rural America behind.

Thank you to the Wireline Competition Bureau for your efforts.