

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: FCC Report to Congress as Required by the Open-Market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications ("ORBIT") Act – Seventeenth Report, IB Docket No. 16-50

While the Commission's Seventeenth ORBIT Act Report is somewhat perfunctory, I appreciate the fact that Commissioners were actually provided the opportunity to vote on a Congressionally-mandated report, a rarity lately at the Commission. For that, I extend my thanks to the Commission's International Bureau, which informed us of the due date and gave Commissioners the chance to express interest in voting on the item. I happily took the opportunity and, as promised, voted timely and without reservation. This calls into question the puzzling reasons provided for why such a procedure couldn't have occurred for similar Commission reports.

The process that occurred here is nearly identical to the one that I have proposed for all delegated authority matters, although the Commission has never delegated this report to staff. Specifically, I have discussed with my colleagues the ability of a Commissioner to elevate an issue to be decided by Bureau staff to the full Commission for a vote. In such a case, the item would be circulated and voted on by the Commission within a set timeframe. For substantive matters, placing the full Commission stamp of consideration and potential approval would 1) improve overall processing time by eliminating further staff work on petitions for reconsideration and applications for review, and 2) minimize the likelihood of the Commission's procedures being used as a dilatory tactic to thwart finality on a particular issue. Alas, this reasonable process reform has been summarily rejected to date.

Some in Congress have identified this report as a possible candidate for elimination given the number of years that have passed since the ORBIT Act's implementation. While I may agree with that view, the full Congress has not repealed the requirement yet. Since it is not our general role to question Congressional prerogatives, they must see the report as appropriate and worthy of Commission attention. Accordingly, I turn my attention to its origination and specific contents.

Reading the Seventeenth Report brings back fond memories of my efforts to help get the ORBIT Act passed into law. At that time, there were two intergovernmental organizations, Intelsat and Inmarsat, layered with government benefits and burdens. Partly through Congressional direction, led by former Representative Tom Bliley and Senator Conrad Burns, who recently passed away, and partly through market forces, these organizations were effectively privatized and the entire marketplace changed forever. In the end, those hard fought legislative battles were worthy of the effort, producing a solid outcome for the American people.

Substantively, the report includes a summary of Inmarsat's comments on the impact of its privatization on U.S. industry, jobs, and industry access to the global marketplace. Inmarsat's summary highlights recent activity in the private satellite marketplace to deploy new satellite systems and discusses next generation capabilities. In addition, the report outlines Inmarsat's interest and potential increased involvement in global flight tracking. These appear to be positive developments, albeit many are outside the regulatory purview of the Commission.