

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Revisions to Reporting Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 17-228

We have reached a significant milestone when it comes to mobile wireless services: for the first time ever, more Americans have cellular telephones than land lines. And for the millions of consumers who are hearing impaired, that wireless phone may be their only means of maintaining contact with loved ones, seeking professional services and job opportunities, or reaching out to first responders in case of emergency.

As technologies evolve, so must we, and since 2003, the Commission has adopted regulations to ensure that Americans with hearing disabilities enjoy the same access to wireless communications as other consumers. Just over a year ago, the Commission adopted a joint proposal advanced by consumer advocacy groups and industry trade associations to increase the availability of hearing aid-compatible wireless handsets for those with hearing loss. This proposal underscored all the stakeholders' collective goal of hearing aid-compatibility for *all* wireless handsets, and set us on a path toward achievement of that goal.

It is against this backdrop, that I considered today's item. I am never one to shy away from an inquiry about the utility of any given regulation to determine whether there are ways to decrease the burden on industry without undermining critical consumer benefits. The very purpose of the hearing aid-compatibility reporting requirements is to provide information to the public, assist with efforts to verify compliance, and monitor the deployment of hearing aid-compatible handsets. Therefore, I support the line of inquiry, on how to balance those very important goals with the reporting burdens faced by small and rural wireless service providers.

I am particularly interested in understanding exactly how onerous these reporting requirements are for non-Tier 1 providers, whether the information collected by the Commission in these reports is available elsewhere, and what impact any further Commission action would have on consumers with hearing disabilities. I encourage all stakeholders to participate in this proceeding, and look forward to reviewing the record that develops.

Thanks are due to the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for all the work you have done over the years to ensure that consumers with hearing impairments have access to a broad selection of innovative and advanced wireless handsets. I look forward to continuing to work with you and my colleagues on achieving 100% hearing aid-compatible wireless handsets in the very near future.