

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Regulation of Business Data Services for Rate-of-Return Local Exchange Carriers*, WC Docket No. 17-144; *Business Data Services in an Internet Protocol Environment*, WC Docket No. 16-143; *Special Access for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers*, WC Docket No. 05-25.

A few weeks ago, I had the chance to visit Morris, Minnesota, which is a small town just east of the South Dakota border. In fact, if you didn't get off of Highway 9, you'd pass right by Morris before the next song came on the radio. When I was there, I visited with two of the largest job creators in the community.

One is a dairy farm that Brad and Krista help run. It started as a family farm 80 years ago, and today its employees own a large share of the operation and its thousand-strong herd of cattle. Broadband is now key to the operation. All of the cows have e-tags on their ears, which monitor vital signs and movement—which means, yes, we're back to connected cows. And the employees now use smartphone apps and a Wi-Fi connection to fine tune everything from feeding regimes to the cow carousel that lets workers milk dozens of cows while they go by on their seven-minute circle around the room.

Later, I toured a manufacturing plant in Morris that employs about 800 people. The company's skilled workforce produces steel conveyors and storage tanks for the energy industry. As their CEO Micah walked me around the plant floor, he said that the business and its hundreds of good-paying jobs simply would not be in Morris without a high-speed broadband connection.

So when we talk about getting more broadband to more Americans, we need to keep in mind the broader economic benefits and jobs that broadband brings to small towns like Morris. Our Universal Service Program is a key part of the solution in communities like this—communities where low population densities and high deployment costs erode the private sector business case. By continuing to provide sufficient and predictable support, we will help encourage deployment where it is needed most.

And by modernizing the rules for carriers that receive USF support, we can provide the right incentives for carriers to bring broadband to homes and businesses in the hardest-to-serve parts of the country. Today's decision is a good example of that. For "BDS," or the types of broadband services often purchased by businesses, the Order allows smaller, rural providers to transition to less burdensome, incentive-based regulation. Doing so would eliminate the need for expensive cost studies and tariff filings as well as compliance with cost assignment and separations rules. The resulting savings can then be passed along to consumers or invested in new networks. And this could make a real difference for businesses in Morris and across rural America.

So I want to thank the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for their work on this item. It has my support.