

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Connect America Fund, ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, Rural Broadband Experiments, Connect America Fund Phase II Auction, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, 14-259, AU Docket No. 17-182, Order on Reconsideration.*

When I think about broadband, I think about the jobs and opportunities it creates for millions of Americans around the country. That is why I continue to emphasize the importance of updating and reforming our infrastructure deployment rules. When we remove regulatory barriers, we make it easier for providers to extend broadband to even more communities.

But for large parts of the country, streamlining alone is not going to be enough. Without additional support, too many Americans will remain on the wrong side of the digital divide. With that in mind, today we reaffirm our commitment to bring the benefits of broadband to all Americans. The rules we finalize today will allow us to make nearly \$2 billion available over the next decade to help deliver broadband and voice service to areas that would otherwise be uneconomical to serve. And the schedule we adopt today will allow us to kick off the auction this summer.

The procedures we've put in place will also help maximize the value that the American people get out of this program. For instance, we target support to those geographic areas the Commission has identified as unserved based on our Form 477 data, which ensures that finite universal service funds are used where the need for them is greatest. And we include safeguards to address instances where our model might overpredict the number of customer locations. We also incentivize prudent spending by using a first-of-its kind reverse auction, which will award support to providers with relatively lower costs. And, as both the Order and the Public Notice make clear, we allow a range of providers and technologies—from fiber to fixed wireless and satellite—to compete, recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to getting broadband to unserved communities.

I believe this Commission is on the right path to removing the regulatory barriers that will help incent greater broadband deployment. But in those areas of the country where challenges persist, this auction will build on the good work we've done so far to make sure that no community gets left behind. Thank you to the staffs of the Wireline Competition Bureau, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force for your hard work on these items. They have my support.