

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Petition of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association and the United States Telecom Association for Forbearance Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160(c) from Application of Contribution Obligations on Broadband Internet Access Transmission Services*, WC Docket No. 17-206.

While I support granting the petition, this item's most significant aspect is the Commission's unequivocal reaffirmation that it does not impose fees on broadband Internet access service. In other words, we don't tax the Internet.

As Chair of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, I am occasionally asked whether the Commission would be willing to expand the base of USF contributors to include broadband users. Having studied the issue and worked for years on Internet tax freedom, enshrined in the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act, I have made clear that expanding the contribution base is something I cannot entertain absent Congressional direction. With this order, I hope that any lingering uncertainty regarding the Commission's willingness to consider new broadband fees has been put to rest and, instead, we can focus our attention on adopting an overall cap on USF.

I vote to approve.