

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90.

The item before us provides some needed flexibility on timing and other testing components while reaffirming the Commission's overall goal of ensuring sufficient, quality broadband from one of our consumer-paid subsidy programs. It has my support.

At the same time, I was dismayed by a certain narrative, put forth not by the Chairman or his good team or people within the agency, but by folks on the outside, that the groups who are seeking some relief and clarification within our broadband testing regime were attempting to harm rural America and subject it to inferior broadband service. I have worked with the petitioner groups for many years, and while Lord knows we have agreed and disagreed on various issues, this type of messaging was unfair and unfounded. These are reputable organizations, representing hardworking companies seeking to bring broadband service to some of the hardest-to-serve regions of our nation. I would urge those casting accusations to take their rhetoric down a notch or two before engaging in further criticism of some of the dedicated people trying to bring digital access to their neighbors, friends, and communities.