
**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

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

As I have said before, affordable broadband is a necessity for all Americans. And the broadband deployment catalyzed by the Connect America Fund is a crucial step towards alleviating internet inequality. It will help empower those living on the outskirts of today's digital society to share in the benefits of telemedicine and distance learning, among others.

But deployment is only half the battle. If the performance of these networks fails to reach even minimum standards of speed and latency, then the people they serve will be unable to fully realize the benefits of connectivity.

Today's Order improves our ability hold carriers to account as they deliver on the promise of broadband. It helps safeguard precious Universal Service dollars. And it offers needed clarity to CAF participants on the requirements they face to prove they have met their obligations. The addition of pre-testing periods to our regime affords both carriers and the Commission time to evaluate how deployments are performing, and I am glad to see that the Commission has mandated public access to the pre-testing data generated by the carriers. I look forward to seeing the numbers.

My thanks to the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for your commitment to getting all Americans connected to broadband, and for your work on this item.