

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 02-55.

This item signifies the dubious reality that fourteen years later we are still trying to conclude the 800 MHz rebanding project, initiated to protect public safety and critical infrastructure systems from receiving harmful interference from commercial operations. Remember this the next time someone tries to argue the Commission can quickly do this or that. In this specific instance, 2,093 out of 2,107 licensees have been reconfigured, with approximately 214 licensees left to close their contracts with Sprint. Why there are still outstanding issues is unclear, but what we do know is that this process still is not done. So, today's order takes definitive steps to streamline the certification process and seeks comment on relieving the parties of additional burdens that have outlived their usefulness in order to bring this program to finality. This makes abundant sense, and I approve.

I am sure many lessons have been learned through this process and, if we knew back then what we know today, things may have been done differently. For those of you keeping track of the numbers, there are 14 licensees located by the Mexican border that still have not been reconfigured, highlighting that cross-border coordination can be extremely tricky. Currently, the Commission and others are dealing with a similar problem involving the channelization and cross-border interference issues between some of our largest wireless providers, FirstNet, and a Mexican licensee in the 700 MHz band. In that instance, we must finalize a plan between the FCC, State Department, and Mexican government to bring this to a resolution immediately, while providing the U.S. and Mexican providers the flexibility to negotiate an alternative solution later, if necessary or possible.

In the meantime, I am pleased to see the 800 MHz effort come closer to completion and I thank all of those who made today's item possible.