

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR
APPROVING IN PART AND CONCURRING IN PART**

Re: *Theia Holdings A, Inc., Request for Authority to Launch and Operate a Non-Geostationary Satellite Orbit System in the Fixed-Satellite Service, Mobile-Satellite Service, and Earth-Exploration Satellite Service*, IBFS File No. SAT-LOA-20161115-00121 and SAT-AMD-20170301-00029, Call Sign S2986

Our decision today is part of the FCC's broader push to enable a new generation of low-earth orbit satellites that could bring more competition and innovative services to Americans. Start-ups and established players alike have plans to launch thousands of these new satellites. And that's great news for consumers across the country. So I support today's decision to authorize Theia to launch and operate 112 satellites that could be used for remote-sensing, smart ag, imaging, and broadband applications.

I concur, however, in the orbital debris portion of today's decision. In that section, the FCC conditions Theia's authorization on compliance with any new rules the Commission adopts in the orbital debris rulemaking we launched in November 2018. I voted to approve that rulemaking after my colleagues agreed to expand the inquiry by adding additional questions about the Commission's expertise and authority in this area. There's no question that the possibility of thousands of new satellites, passing each other in low-earth orbit at hypervelocity, presents complex questions and will likely require a new set of rules that address collision risks. But as I said at the time, it is far from clear that the FCC is the right federal agency to make these assessments.¹ It is rocket science, after all.

My initial concerns have only grown as stakeholders have filed comments in our rulemaking proceeding. For instance, those comments show that Executive Branch agencies, including NASA and the FAA, are taking action on orbital debris consistent with the President's decisions in the Space Policy Directives. This includes work NASA is doing to revise the U.S. Government Orbital Debris Mitigation Standard Practices at the direction of the President. In my view, we should continue to look to these agencies with deep background and expertise on orbital debris for their leadership on appropriate mitigation measures. While the FCC has made no final decision in our rulemaking proceeding—and I look forward to continuing to engage with my colleagues at our sister agencies on these complex issues—I remain concerned that the FCC is not the right federal agency to lead on orbital debris. Therefore, I concur on this portion of today's decision.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to the International Bureau for its work on this application.

¹ *Mitigation of Orbital Debris in the New Space Age*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Separate Statement of Commissioner Brendan Carr, IB Docket No. 18-313, FCC 18-159 (2018), <https://go.usa.gov/xmQmX>.
IB Dkt No. 18-313, FCC18-159 (rel. Nov. 19, 2018).