

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

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

Get ready for what is headed to our skies. In the past year, the Federal Communications Commission has approved over 13,000 new satellites for launch. There's a lot of good that can come from all this new activity in the atmosphere. It means more capacity to connect more people in more places, expanded access to education and health care, and an ability to grow economies beyond the limits of today's terrestrial networks. Because this order and authorization is a small part of making all these big things possible, it has my support.

Of course, increasing the number of satellites in orbit like this brings new challenges. Chief among them is that the growing amount of debris in orbit could make some regions of space unusable for decades to come. That should concern us—because junking up our far altitudes now will constrain our ability to innovate, connect, and advance satellite systems in the future.

That's why last year I called for the FCC to do more than rely on our old orbital debris rules for next-generation constellations. I called for us to initiate a comprehensive review to mitigate collision risks and ensure space sustainability going forward. And I called on the agency to coordinate more closely with other federal actors with distinct space interests and come up with clear national policies for this jumble of new satellite activity.

But instead of doing this, the agency started a rulemaking that questioned if we have the expertise to work on the satellite issues involving orbital debris. This is strange, because we have been doing just that for more than a decade and a half, since 2004 when we first adopted our existing orbital debris framework. It also asked if we should cede our authority to other federal agencies that do not have statutory responsibility over commercial satellite systems. It worries me that this agency can question its own expertise to manage new space activity and nonetheless rubber stamp 13,000 new satellites for launch. Something in that equation does not compute.

I believe our authority and responsibility to manage new commercial satellite systems and orbital debris risks is clear. We need to correct course. Because it's not enough to approve new satellite systems like we do here, we need to move expeditiously to develop a realistic debris plan that can be implemented stat. The new space age is not waiting—and we have work to do.