

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Auction of Flexible-Use Service Licenses in the 3.7–3.98 GHz Band for Next-Generation Wireless Services; Notice and Filing Requirements, Minimum Opening Bids, Upfront Payments, and Other Procedures for Auction 107; Bidding in Auction 107 Scheduled to Begin December 8, 2020; AU Docket No. 20-25.*

Thursday, March 12, was my last full day at the Portals, the FCC’s headquarters for 20 years. When we came into the building that morning, we didn’t know that, with the exception of some clean up and packing, many of us wouldn’t step into our offices again. The sudden shock to work life at the FCC was felt in similar ways across the country as the pandemic seriously altered Americans’ lives. Our daily routines—driving to work, sending the kids off to school, even catching up with friends—were upended. Staying at home prompted us to recreate these routines online in an instant. And that sudden, massive transition made our Internet connections more important than ever.

Although we didn’t know it at the time, ongoing FCC initiatives prepared us to respond to the pandemic. In 2018, we began the process to launch the Connected Care Pilot Program. The effort over the last two years to assess the need for telehealth, find funding, target support, and set application criteria, has allowed the Commission to expedite that \$100 million program. And it gave us a lot of experience to leverage when Congress directed us to build on the pilot program through a new appropriation. Thus far, we have awarded \$200 million to healthcare providers to combat disease, including COVID-19.

The pandemic also was a shock to our broadband networks. In the first few weeks of the pandemic, Internet traffic surged about 25 percent on fixed networks and 20 percent on mobile ones. Yet our networks held up and, through nimble traffic management and spectrum leases, actually increased speeds. So while European and Australian officials asked streaming platforms to reduce video quality to prevent their networks from breaking, Americans streamed, chatted, and worked away.

Again, although we didn’t know it at the time, we were a step ahead thanks to ongoing FCC initiatives, including our aggressive push to bring more mid-band spectrum to market. At 3.5 GHz, we are in the middle of a robust auction at this very moment that has generated more than \$1.8 billion in gross proceeds thus far. With EBS, which had not been assigned in roughly half the country, we are pushing mid-band out into the commercial marketplace. At 2 GHz AWS-4, we now have a binding commitment from DISH to build broadband using its mid-band licenses—an intensive use of the spectrum that DISH wasn’t planning on absent our demands. We are pressing ahead with 5.9 GHz and 6 GHz, as well. And at 3.7 GHz, in the item we’re voting on today, we continue the sprint to a C-band auction this year.

Mid-band already is providing hundreds of megabits of 5G mobile performance in markets across the country. It can be used for telehealth, remote learning, or working from home—use cases we’ve suddenly had to rely on. And while none of us can say for sure what particular need will arise in the future, we can be sure that this mid-band capacity will help us meet it.

I thank the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and all of the Commission’s staff for their work on this item. It has my support.