

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS

Re: *Facilitating Shared Use in the 3100-3550 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 19-348

Mid-band spectrum is critical to our broadband future but it's nearly impossible to identify bands that aren't occupied by existing users with ongoing operations. In many cases, those existing users are federal agencies with mission critical uses. That's why the Commission works closely with those agencies to institute sharing arrangements that will protect existing operations while allowing non-federal use.

This item is a good step towards expanding available mid-band spectrum. It implements our decision from last year and relocates existing secondary non-federal users from the 3.3 to 3.55 GHz portion of the band, setting the stage for new entrants and new uses. Next, it proposes a sharing regime between non-federal licensees and federal users that will free up 100 megahertz of mid-band airwaves for licensed, exclusive use across most of the country while protecting critical federal operations.

I'm glad my colleagues accepted my edits seeking comment on an alternative approach that would incorporate aspects of our 3.5 GHz band rules, including license areas, power levels, and opportunistic use. Only last month, our auction of Priority Access Licenses in that band closed after raising more than \$4.58 billion in bids. That auction not only made available the largest number of FCC spectrum licenses ever, but set a record for the number of bidders – more than 270. The number and variety of new licensees, coupled with the unlicensed use already underway in the band, promise to make the 3.5 GHz band a source of tremendous innovation and opportunity. It therefore makes sense to consider whether a similar approach might work in the adjacent 3.45 GHz band. I look forward to reviewing the comments.

Like many, I've been puzzled by continued talk about the Defense Department creating a nationwide 5G network for shared military and civilian use, potentially even involving the spectrum discussed in this proceeding. Despite repeated rebukes, this idea continues to surface, providing yet another example of how this Administration simply can't get on the same page on telecom issues. This is not a close call, and this is not an idea that I expect will bear fruit. More broadly, just in the last two years, our agency has repeatedly received contradictory or confusing messages from the White House and Executive Branch agencies on a number of issues, including the 24 GHz band, the 5.9 GHz band, the L band, and most recently, even about the potential for Open RAN networks.

We should exercise the FCC's authority by moving forward as quickly as possible in this proceeding and working with our federal partners to free up additional spectrum in the lower 3 GHz and other bands.

Thank you to the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for their work on this proceeding.