

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Amendment of Section 74.1231(i) of the Commission's Rules on FM Broadcast Booster Stations*, MB Docket No. 20-401; *Modernization of Media Initiative*, MB Docket No. 17-105; *Amendment of Section 74.1231(i) of the Commission's Rules on FM Broadcast Booster Stations*, RM-11854.

One of the greatest technological success stories of the last 40 years is the evolution of cellular networks. Without an FCC mandate or the need to ask permission, network operators have continued to upgrade their technology platforms to unlock the potential of wireless communications. Rather than broadcasting the same content over wide areas, cellular architecture has evolved from the first and tinny phone calls of the analog 1G era to today's 4G and 5G networks, which allow carriers to deliver whatever content a user wants—and an occasional phone call—directly to their smartphone.

For too long, broadcasters have not enjoyed the same freedom to experiment with new technologies as their mobile wireless brethren, particularly when it comes to technologies that allow them to geo-target their content. As a result, changes to broadcast television technology have been slow and largely limited to the transition from analog to digital. But things are looking up thanks to a new and innovative broadcast transmission standard known as ATSC 3.0. This new standard will give television broadcasters the flexibility to send targeted or customized content directly to a particular household or handheld device. And this won't be limited to traditional video offerings, as ATSC 3.0 will also support innovative new services, such as autonomous vehicle support, IoT, smart ag, and telemedicine.

In recognition of this immense potential, I have been leading the FCC's recent efforts to promote this new set of "Broadcast Internet" services. This summer, we ensured that these services would not be weighed down by legacy media regulations. And we will soon be voting on another item that will continue to promote investment in these exciting new offerings.

Which brings us to broadcast radio. For most radio stations, broadcast technology has been largely unchanged since its inception and even those stations broadcasting in digital lack the kind of targeted content offerings that consumers value, indeed demand, in other services. That could soon change, however, thanks to a decades-long fixture of the FM band—booster stations. Due to market-driven innovations in technology, it is now possible for FM stations to use boosters to broadcast original content in a specific geographic area instead of just passively repeating a signal from the primary station. This technology promises to enhance service in local markets and help these stations compete in an ever-expanding media marketplace. And it means that the freedom to transmit targeted or customized content, which mobile wireless carriers have long enjoyed and broadcast television stations are now realizing with ATSC 3.0, could soon extend to broadcast radio as well.

Getting this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking across the finish line required more than a few oars in the water. So I want to extend my thanks to Commissioner Starks for partnering with me on this effort. We both saw the public interest benefits of this new technology, and I welcomed the chance to work with him and his team over the past few weeks and months to ensure that the Commission launched this rulemaking.

Ultimately, the FCC cannot operate as a restraint on innovation and deployment of next-generation services, regardless of the platform. We have been presented with potentially industry-altering technology that will allow FM broadcasters to deliver targeted content over their existing spectrum. These possibilities must be explored, and I am glad that my colleagues have agreed to do just that with this item.