

**STATEMENT OF
FCC COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Unlicensed White Space Device Operations in the Television Bands*, ET Docket No. 20-36.

This item represents a longtime labor of love for me, as I have advocated for the efficient use of the TV white spaces since the mid-2000s. The flexibility reflected in today's notice will help bring further wireless operations and successful deployments to this band. As most people already know, the very nature of television broadcast signals necessitates that frequencies remain fallow so that one full-power station does not interfere with another nearby. Additionally, there are some portions of the country—rural areas in particular—where not all channels are being used, even after the station repack following the broadcast incentive auction. It is common sense to make these frequencies available for additional non-interfering wireless services, including those that bring broadband access to unserved households.

Some have claimed that white spaces never lived up to the previous hype and disparaged flaws in the first-generation of the database. However, now that we are getting to the point, post incentive auction, where there is more certainty about spectrum availability, that criticism is no longer compelling. We are finally in a position where interested parties can determine whether there is usable spectrum in a specific area, providing them with the needed assurances to invest in and deploy systems. And, improvements have been made to ensure the accuracy of the database. While the Commission took steps to provide additional flexibility to white space providers by increasing antenna height and made rule tweaks to increase the reliability of device location information in the database almost a year ago, the record that developed also included other ideas that can be implemented to maximize the potential of these frequencies. That is why I am pleased to have led the effort and secured the commitments to bring the new NPRM forward.

I thank Microsoft for submitting the official petition for rulemaking that serves as the foundation for today's item. The recommendations provided, which include further increases to power limits in rural areas, additional antenna height modifications, and flexibility to provide narrowband IOT, will be particularly useful in providing service in the more remote and unserved parts of the country and allow for a wide variety of use cases.

Although there are remaining TV white space issues to be resolved, such as facilitating unlicensed use in Channel 37, I applaud the fact that we are addressing the less controversial issues here today. I thank the Chairman for moving this important item and look forward to an order in the coming months. In a future proceeding, it is imperative that the Commission further explore the opportunities in Channel 37 and the means to relocate the wireless medical services to a more suitable location.

I approve.