

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Competitive Bidding Procedures and Certain Program Requirements for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction (Auction 904)*, AU Docket No. 20-24; WC Docket No. 19-126; WC Docket No. 10-90.

The major policy debate over how to structure the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction was resolved in last month's Report and Order, and now the Commission moves on to determining the largely administrative pre-auction and bidding procedures. Any disagreements with respect to the policy cuts in our previous decision should, therefore, be considered separately from this item.

Indeed, this very straightforward Public Notice proposes to adopt many of the same sound processes as in the Commission's successful Connect America Fund Phase II auction, and it has my support. While the proposal is not identical in every respect to our previous framework, most of the adjustments are simply intended to address lessons from CAF II and implement the new clearing round bid assignment rule. And, although the auction's bias toward certain technologies over others appears to be a foregone conclusion, I appreciate the addition of clarifying language to the circulated draft to soften the Commission's prejudice in this regard. I commend the staff involved in this item, including the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, for their hard work in pushing the auction forward.

I look forward to our next steps in implementing the RDOF, especially our release of an initial list of eligible areas and a corresponding challenge process. The latter process is vital to ensuring that our scarce funds are not used to subsidize overbuilding, and I plan to monitor it closely.