

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Establishing a 5G Fund for Rural America*, GN Docket No. 20-32, WT Docket No. 10-208.

In 2015 and 2016, the U.S. was at serious risk of ceding global leadership in 5G to China and our other global competitors. Back then, it took too long and cost too much to build Internet infrastructure in this country. Since then, we have executed on a concrete plan to turn things around.

That plan is now delivering results. Internet speeds are up about 85% since year end 2016. More miles of fiber—the high-speed lines that connect our homes and cell sites—were built out last year than ever before. And small cells—the building blocks for 5G—have been installed at a record-setting clip.

The U.S. now has the strongest 5G platform in the world. That network will help power our economy out of this COVID-19 downturn and support America's next great comeback.

In all of this, regulations matter. Under our 5G plan, we cut red tape that only drove up costs and held back Internet builds. We freed up more spectrum than any other country in the world—including taking on those thorny spectrum bands that past Commissions opted not to deal with. And those decisions are why 5G is live today not just in New York and San Francisco but in places like Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Peachtree Corners, Georgia.

With all of that progress, there is still a lot of work ahead. We want every community in the country to have a fair shot at next-gen connectivity. And there are many Americans in rural areas where there is no business case for building 5G networks. To close that gap, we're now proposing the largest effort ever to support high-speed mobile networks to communities across the country.

I am pleased that we seek comment today on ways we can move forward quickly, including whether we should use the best available data now or wait until even better mapping information is available. And I am glad that we are targeting at least \$1 billion for the support of precision agriculture applications. I have seen firsthand—from Indiana to Nebraska to South Dakota—that America's farmers and ranchers are leveraging cutting edge technologies—from drones to connected combines—in their effort to feed the world. I am glad that they will have our support.

I want to thank the staff of the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, the Wireline Competition Bureau, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and the Office of Economics and Analytics for their work on this item. It has my support.