

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection*, WC Docket No. 19-195;  
*Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*, WC Docket No. 11-10.

I have long focused on promoting data-driven decision-making in our all of our areas of responsibility—especially broadband deployment. For too long, consumers, states, cities, and other organizations have called on the FCC to get its broadband data in order. We have all heard from American households that have had the disappointing experience of seeing broadband availability for their home on the FCC’s maps when they know that no broadband provider actually serves their location. And some states have grown so frustrated with the FCC’s broadband data and maps that they have invested in developing their own maps using a more rigorous approach.

The same data deficiencies have plagued our distribution of the limited Universal Service Fund. For tens of millions of Americans, we have not finished the job of ending internet inequality. We need to make every USF dollar count. But many of recent USF decisions have proceeded without the kind of data we need to ensure we are maximizing our efforts to close the digital divide.

So I am pleased that this decision, combined with the mapping funding Congress appropriated last month, will move the Commission toward significantly better data practices. The maps we develop in the coming months should provide a better representation of real-world broadband availability, and the Commission will be prepared to respond to outside feedback about those maps. These are important developments, and now is the time for thoughtful execution. I look forward to working with the Commission’s talented staff and the many stakeholders who have weighed in during this process to make better broadband maps a reality.