

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Allowing Earlier Equipment Marketing and Importation Opportunities*; ET Docket No. 20-382.

Technology has changed how manufacturers produce devices and deliver them to the consumer. The Internet has allowed consumers to learn about new products at an early stage and play a role in bringing that product to market. Direct-to-consumer sales and conditional pre-orders have become common practice, even more so during the pandemic. For reference, in less than 10 years, the crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter, has raised \$5.4 billion dollars in pre-orders and has launched over 500,000 projects.¹ Through platforms like these, consumers have funded devices behind innovations like texting from your smartwatch or virtual reality headsets.²

The item we adopt today updates our rules to keep pace with these trends in the device market. This item not only removes obstacles for small businesses and start-ups, but also encourages innovative new devices and applications. It is important to note, however, that although we are facilitating the process of getting new devices to consumers, we are preserving strong protections against any potential harm to consumers.

I support this item and thank the staff of the Office of Engineering and Technology for their hard work on this item.

¹ Statista Research Department, *Kickstarter: total amount of funding pledged 2012-2020* (Jan 11, 2021), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/310218/total-kickstarter-funding/>.

² See Tracey Lien, *Pebble smartwatch maker calls it quits, proving that being first doesn't guarantee success* (Dec. 7, 2016), <https://www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-pebble-shut-down-20161207-story.html>; Lisa Eadicicco, *Facebook's Latest \$2 Billion Purchase All Started with This Kickstarter Campaign* (Mar. 25, 2014), <https://www.businessinsider.com/oculus-rift-kickstarter-2014-3>.