

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Connect America Fund, et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, No. 14-58, 09-197, 16-271, RM-11868, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (May 19, 2022).

Canistota is one of South Dakota's classic small towns. Like many of the farming communities that dot the eastern part of the state, Canistota's founders carved the town's main streets out of the clay, sand, and gravel that dominate the Drift Prairie region in the late 1800s. The 200 or so houses that make up the community are surrounded by wide acres and miles of corn and soybean fields. And it's an exciting time for Canistota-ans. Today, the community is served by a new, high-speed connection that is equivalent to what you would expect in a far bigger city. About a year ago, I had the chance to join Congressman Dusty Johnson as a crew from Golden West Telecommunications pushed aside old copper lines that dated back to the 1970s and pulled the fiber needed to deliver high-speed service to the town.

Golden West began serving the area nearly 20 years ago, and thanks to the FCC's A-CAM program, they've made steady progress expanding access to high-speed broadband to the homes and businesses located there. The new high-speed connections are a game changer. The increased bandwidth has opened up new opportunities for telehealth, education, and precision agriculture for the families that live there. Given the low-population density throughout the area, it would likely be impossible for any ISP to find the capital necessary to construct a high-speed network. That's why A-CAM, as well as our other high-cost programs, are so important.

So I am pleased today that we are considering ways to enable A-CAM recipients to build out even more high-speed connections. And our focus on this is coming at the right time. As I've talked about before, there is no shortage of dollars out there available for broadband. In fact, by my calculations there's at least \$800 billion spread across various departments and agencies. And just last week, NTIA released rules for their new \$42.5 billion BEAD program. Going forward, it's imperative that these programs be coordinated in order to prevent subsidized overbuilding in areas already funded by other federal or state programs.

We have an historic opportunity before us to close the digital divide once and for all. But we will fail unless we have smart policies in place to guide those efforts. So I look forward to working with my colleagues on steps we can take to leverage existing programs—such as A-CAM—to deliver more high-speed connections across America while recognizing any potential actions would not occur in a vacuum.

I thank staff from the Wireline Competition Bureau for their work on this item and Chairwoman Rosenworcel for bringing it forward for consideration. It has my support.