

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Facilitating Access to Spectrum for Offshore Uses and Operations*, WT Docket No. 22-204, Notice of Inquiry (June 8, 2022)

From the inception of cellular licensing way back in the 1980s, the Commission has had a framework in place for bringing wireless connectivity to offshore platforms drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The time has come to explore solutions that also work for offshore renewables—in the Gulf, on the Atlantic seaboard, off the West Coast, and wherever else the oceans take us.

I have talked often about how the work we do in this building can help mitigate climate change and its harmful effects. Earlier this year at State of the Net, I shared my vision for a technology and telecom sector that would build out the environmental benefits along with the economic benefits of 5G—embracing efficient new radio technologies that consume dramatically less energy per bit; driving impact through energy-saving applications like smart grids and smart cities; and minimizing electronic waste, to name a few.

Here at the FCC, our programs and decisions are also working to improve the resilience of our communications networks, and to make sure that more Americans stay connected during severe storms and other alarmingly frequent natural disasters.

But we shouldn't stop there, and after one of the warmest years on record, we must keep pushing. I support this Notice of Inquiry because it takes an important step toward ensuring that our rules work for a clean energy economy. By 2030, the federal government is targeting at least 30 gigawatts in offshore wind capacity, more than one thousand times 2019 deployments yet still a small fraction of our total potential. States from North Carolina up to Massachusetts have upped the ante with targets that, in the aggregate, exceed the federal amount.¹ Real scale is on the horizon, and each project will rely on wireless in one form or another. So will the hubs of economic activity—and new employment—that these projects spin out, from busier ports, to offshore grids, to an uptick in American shoreside manufacturing.² Our inquiry puts us ahead of the game in understanding these connectivity requirements, and makes sure we'll have the right framework in place to meet their needs, too. And we correctly seek comment on virtually every framework imaginable—licensed by rule, licensed by site, licensed “light,” by geography, and even unlicensed—so that we calibrate our approach to each band and the nature of demand behind it.

¹ Emma Penrod, *Offshore Wind on Track To Hit, Possibly Exceed Biden's 30 GW Target by 2030*, Utility Dive (Feb. 17, 2022), <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/offshore-wind-on-track-to-hit-possibly-exceed-bidens-30-gw-target-by-2030/619002/>; Tanya Peevey & Tony Lenoir, *Assessing Wind Speeds, Potential Performance Across Atlantic Offshore Portfolio*, S&P Global Market Intelligence (May 18, 2022), <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/research/assessing-wind-speeds-potential-performance-across-atlantic-offshore-portfolio>.

² See, e.g., Jeffrey Ball, *America's Offshore Wind-Powered Future Begins in a Texas Shipyard*, TexasMonthly (May 2021), <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/offshore-wind-power-brownsville-shipyard-renewable-energy/>; *First U.S. Offshore Wind Blade Facility Will be Built in Virginia*, The Maritime Executive (Oct. 25, 2021), <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/first-offshore-wind-turbine-blade-facility-to-be-in-virginia-port>.

I am grateful to the Commission staff who developed this item, and it has my full support.