

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Empowering Broadband Consumers Through Transparency*, CG Docket No. 22-2, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (November 14, 2022)

A consumer's ability to access clear, comprehensible, and accurate information regarding his or her broadband internet access service plan is necessary to ensure a competitive and innovative marketplace. This Order will provide consumers the transparency they need and deserve as they consider broadband options.

Our action today fulfills our statutory obligation under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Infrastructure Act). But, the labels are a byproduct of a longer period of collaborative work between industry, public interest advocates, and the Commission—specifically the 2016 recommendation of the Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee. I want to thank all of the stakeholders that have led to the label we create today. I strongly feel that some of our best outcomes come from proceedings where different advocates work together in pursuit of the same goal.

I am excited that consumers will have an easy-to-read label with the information they need. Instead of legalese, consumers will have clear, straightforward information about a provider's service offerings, including pricing, introductory rate information, other fees, data allowances, performance metrics, and ACP participation available at the point of sale. Consumers will better understand their broadband offering, and will be empowered to more easily comparison shop when competing options exist. I fully expect that this transparency will increase competition and hopefully result in lower prices for consumers. Further, the information provided in these labels will be included as part of our Affordable Connectivity Program Transparency Data Collection, which means our action today will help broadband consumers as a whole.

And when I say consumers as a whole, I do mean everyone. I strongly support the decision to make the labels accessible for individuals with disabilities, and machine-readable. It is imperative that all Americans have access to this important information. Similarly, I am glad that when an Internet Service Provider markets service in a different language, a label in that language will be available for those consumers. And, I agree with the decision to require ISPs to offer online account portals to their customers so that a customer's label is available online on-demand.

But, this is just the first step, and we shouldn't rest on our laurels. We must continue to listen to the record to improve the labels, if necessary. So I'm glad we ask additional questions in the Further Notice. In today's world, consumers care about more than just speed. And, I continue to emphasize every chance that I can that our broadband networks must be secure. So, I look forward to seeing how the record develops regarding adding cybersecurity information to the broadband label. Publishing high-level information about cybersecurity practices as part of the label could be very valuable to consumers so they can make an individual risk assessment when selecting their broadband provider. And it can push ISPs to compete on network security, as well as speed, to the benefit of the nation.

I appreciate the work done by the many individuals, consumer advocates, industry members, trade associations, and academics, who came together to see the goals of this item through. And, I especially want to highlight and thank the fantastic Commission staff who worked diligently on this item to complete it within our statutory deadline. It has my support.