

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Achieving 100% Wireless Handset Model Hearing Aid Compatibility; Improvements to Benchmarks and Related Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket Nos. 23-388, 15-285 (terminated), Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (December 13, 2023)

Everyone in America deserves access to modern communications. That includes Americans with disabilities, and in particular those who are hearing impaired. That's why I'm proud to support today's notice of proposed rulemaking. This proposal puts us down a path to ensuring that every single smartphone sold in America can be used with hearing aids. Every model, all of them. 100 percent.

Reaching 100% compatibility will give hearing-impaired consumers more choice, and that's reason enough to invest in making it a reality. But our HAC efforts also show that we can absolutely achieve equal access to communications without compromise. It may take vision, hard work, time, innovation, commitment, resolve, and collaboration. But whether we're talking hearing-aid compatibility or the digital divide, don't ever tell me that 100% is simply impossible.

Speaking of hard work, this item was only made possible by years of collaboration among industry, consumer groups, standards organizations, and of course government. For all those who contributed—including our staff in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau—thank you for your efforts, and for leading the way. As the technical matters raised in this item show, we have plenty left to do. We're counting on you to keep up the work.

This item has my full support.