STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS

Re: *Advancing Understanding of Non-Federal Spectrum Usage*, Notice of Inquiry, WT Docket No. 23-232 (August 3, 2023)

As many of you know, I've been a consistent advocate for enhancing data-driven decision-making. For example, leading up to the passage of the Broadband DATA Act, I proudly championed the need to improve our mapping capabilities so that we can succeed in extending connectivity everywhere. In addition, I've called for the periodic evaluation of FCC programs, including initiatives focused on expanding spectrum availability like the Enhanced Competition Incentive Program. And I also voiced concerns about the quality of data used to determine support amounts for rural hospitals and clinics—concerns that are now steering us toward new rules that do not leave rural patients behind in the age of telehealth and connected medicine.

Whether we're deciding which way to go in a complex proceeding, or simply looking back to see what we've done well and where there's room for improvement, having the right information at our fingertips can help us better serve the public and promote accountability. And where we embrace the use of data already, we should continue to search for ways to enhance its accuracy, reliability, and completeness for the many important tasks before us.

Which brings us to today, and the important task before us. Expanding spectrum access is particularly ripe for data-driven enhancements. Even though the resource is fixed, unused amounts are generally falling—all while demand only continues to build. Though the task often seems impossible, finding new ways to make more spectrum available is vital to our economic success and national security. As it turns out, developing accurate information about how we're using spectrum today may be one of the best ways to ensure we have enough of it available for use tomorrow. Better data can help us identify opportunities for greater usage, develop and enforce more efficient technical and service rules, and learn from past spectrum decisions.

Perhaps most importantly, these benefits propagate well beyond FCC walls. Researchers across industry, academia, and government regularly query our licensing databases. With greater visibility into how spectrum is used, they'll be even more able to unlock opportunities for coordination and efficient spectrum transactions and develop and deploy new wireless technologies. As I mentioned in June, advancements in AI could be part of this story.

Of course, there are significant and longstanding questions to be considered in this endeavor. I look forward to seeing a robust record, and how best to move forward.

I thank the staff for their hard work on this item. It has my full support.