

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Allocation of Spectrum for Non-Federal Space Launch Operations, Amendment of Part 2 of the Commission's Rules for Federal Earth Stations Communicating with Non-Federal Fixed Satellite Service Space Stations, Federal Space Station Use of the 399.9-400.05 MHz Band*; ET Docket No. 13-115, RM-11341; Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

Just moments ago, we voted an item to streamline our satellite licensing rules, and earlier this year, we adopted a spectrum framework to spur entry by new NGSO systems. Those were important steps that will drive innovation and competition in commercial space. But if we truly want to be successful, we can't just focus on what happens in orbit. We also need to account for the precious few minutes it takes to get an object *into* space. That means our efforts must start at the launch.

There's plenty of opportunity for progress. For years, launch providers have relied on cramped and uncertain spectrum access authorized piecemeal by special temporary authority. While that band-aid approach may once have proved adequate, it's no match for the new cadence of a frothy commercial space industry—where days, not weeks or months, now separate each launch on average. Remember that each launch costs millions to execute and carries many millions more in terms of the value of the payload. So if we want to make it attractive to invest in new and greater commercial space opportunities, a more efficient and more predictable launch clearance process is a great place to start.

In 2021, we made a downpayment on fixing the problem. Today, we reach for liftoff. Consistent with bipartisan legislation on the issue, we expand access to the 2200-2290 MHz band and identify additional launch spectrum in 2025-2110 MHz. We also stay ahead of a potential growth in demand by seeking comment on ways to free up the 2360-2395 MHz band, and on ways to support the spectrum needs of emerging endeavors like commercial crew and cargo missions. Equally important, we establish a predictable licensing regime that will move providers away from tedious launch-by-launch authorizations, while fully protecting other federal agencies and facilitating the process of coordinating with them. Combined with our larger space agenda, these efforts will help us eliminate unnecessary barriers that make it harder to get into space.

A special thanks belongs to leaders in Congress who created a blueprint for today's action with efforts like the Launch Communications Act. I'd especially like to thank Senators Hickenlooper and Schmitt, and Representatives Soto and Dunn, for their leadership on this issue. I'd also like to extend my thanks to the Chairwoman for bringing this item to the floor, and to our Office of Engineering and Technology for their hard work. This item has my full support.